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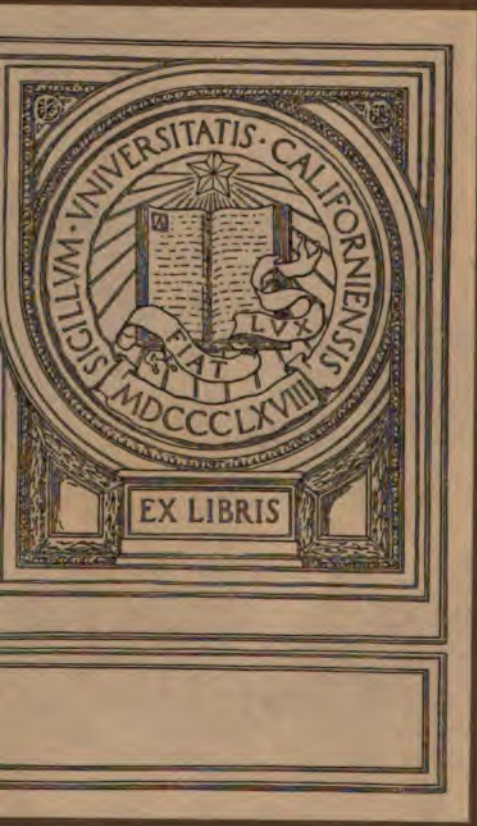
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MARTIN LUTHER

AND THE

REFORMATION IN GERMANY

·MARTIN LUTHER·

AND THE

REFORMATION IN GERMANY

UNTIL THE CLOSE OF THE DIET OF WORMS

BY THE LATE

CHARLES BEARD, B.A., LL.D.

EDITED BY J. FREDERICK SMITH

LONDON
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH & CO., 1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE
1889

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TO

THOMAS AND ELIZABETH ASHTON

IN MEMORY OF

A LONG AND UNBROKEN FRIENDSHIP

AND OF

THE HAPPY YEARS OF WORK DURING WHICH

THIS BOOK WAS PLANNED

238847

PREFACE

FROM the author's Introduction, in which he describes the scope of his projected History of the Reformation in Germany, it will be seen that this volume is but a first instalment of a larger work. Happily the volume is, however, anything but an unfinished fragment. It was not only left by the writer ready for the press, but it brings its story down to the close of the first great period of the German Reformation. When the Diet of Worms broke up, German Protestantism had been finally and fully inaugurated, and its central figure, Martin Luther, had reached the summit of his heroism and his revolt.

My editorial duties have been hardly more than to see through the press a singularly and characteristically perfect manuscript; and they have been lightened by the faithful care with which Mrs. Beard and her son, Mr. Lewis Beard, B.A., have compared manuscript and proof. I have considered it needful, in order to guard against accidental error, to exercise a general supervision of the narrative, to compare quotations with the original passages, and to verify references. No alterations have been introduced into the text or the notes, except where an obvious *lapsus calami* had crept in, which, however, thanks to the author's extreme accuracy, has happened but very occasionally. Here and there in the notes a reference to books or articles published since the manuscript was finished has been added. For the title of the volume, the headings of the chapters and the pages, and the list of the principal authorities and editions used by the author, I am responsible; and for the Index, Mr. Lewis Beard.

From the list of authorities and from the notes it will be seen that Dr. Charles Beard kept pace to the very last with the latest research in a field which has been thoroughly upturned by the critical industry of such specialists as Seidemann, Köstlin, Kolde, Knaake, Kawerau, and their fellow-labourers. And it may not be out of place to remark that Dr. Julius Köstlin's Life of Luther, with others that have followed it, placed all preceding lives of the Reformer in the class of antiquated literature, in point of historical accuracy and thoroughness.

Of the mingled feelings with which I have worked, all readers of the book will, I believe, share those of thankfulness for what is here finished, and of regret for what has been lost in the volumes which remain unwritten. It is much to have the great story of the successful launching of the German Reformation told by one who was so singularly qualified to tell it well. Would that his pen had been permitted to trace the further development of the movement, and to follow the lives of its prominent representatives until their work was done!

To his Hibbert Lectures the author prefixed a motto, taken from Lessing, and I cannot resist the temptation to append here a passage from Goethe, which, like that from Lessing, seems to me to breathe the spirit that inspired all Dr. Charles Beard's studies in this great period of history:—

"Wir wissen gar nicht was wir Luthern und der Reformation im allgemeinen alles zu danken haben. Wir sind frei geworden von den Fesseln geistiger Borniertheit, wir sind infolge unserer fortwachsenden Kultur fähig geworden, zur Quelle zurückzukehren und das Christenthum in seiner Reinheit zu fassen. Wir haben wieder den Mut, mit festen Füssen auf Gottes Erde zu stehen und uns in unserer gottbegabten Menschennatur zu fühlen . . . Wir werden alle nach und nach aus einem Christenthum des Wortes und Glaubens immer mehr zu einem Christenthum der Gesinnung und That kommen."—*Gespräche mit Eckermann.*

J. FREDERICK SMITH.

CLIFTON, BRISTOL, *July* 1889.

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INTRODUCTION

THERE are two points of view from which the Reformation of the sixteenth century may be regarded. Looked at from the first, it appears to be what its name imports—an effort to reclaim the Christian Church from inveterate doctrinal and practical corruption to a more primitive conception of truth and a higher standard of purity. In the practical or disciplinary sense the Latin Church had made repeated efforts to reform itself. Monasticism, both in its original foundation and in its repeated revivals, was such an effort. An organised and general attempt at reformation was the object of the Councils of Pisa, Constanz, and Basel at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The corruption of Christianity, in the forms in which it was commonly presented to the people, threw mystics back upon the ideas which lie at the basis of all religion, and gave rise to sects, which lived a hidden life, beneath the surface of mediæval society. A disciplinary reformation was carried into effect by Ferdinand and Isabella, in Castile and Arragon, at the end of the fifteenth century, and was the object of the Fifth Lateran Council, held at Rome in 1512-1517. In Spain, in France, in Germany, in England the weaknesses of the existing system were strongly felt, and demands were made for reform, which Rome, then under the rule of profligate Popes, resisted or evaded. But this movement was taken out of the hands of the Church by Luther. Having fought his own way to what would now be called a Protestant conception of spiritual religion, though without becoming conscious of his divergence from Catholic standards, he first attacked the abuses connected with the sale of indulgences, and then was led on, step by step, to

an assault upon the whole position of the Church. His doctrine of the authority of Scripture undermined that of the authority of the Church; his theory of the priesthood of the believer, the whole sacerdotal and sacramental system. The result was, within certain territorial limits, the foundation of Churches which not only separated themselves from allegiance to the Pope, but established an administration of Christianity based upon ideas of religion other than those which obtained within the Catholic pale. The Protestant Reformation was thus, in its essence, doctrinal; it was the substitution of one series of conceptions of Christianity for another: and it reformed the practical abuses peculiar to Catholicism by destroying the system upon which they were an excrescence. But while, at the Diet of Augsburg, and on every similar occasion, the Catholic Church refused to make the slightest doctrinal concession to the dissidents, the demand for disciplinary reform was never silent within her borders: and the Council of Trent, which settled the Creed of the Church upon the old lines, in matters of administration, opened a new era. The necessity of recovering lost ground from a victorious Protestantism, the election to the Papal Chair of a series of austere Pontiffs, the foundation of the Society of Jesus and other orders animated by a spirit of stern and enthusiastic piety, produced the Counter-Reformation. The doctrinal position of the Latin Church remained unchanged, but it was purged of its worst practical scandals.

But this summary does not cover all the facts of the case, or indicate their wider relations. Why were the efforts of the Church to reform itself ineffectual? It may be said that monasticism, in its attempt to lift humanity to an unreal and impossible height of perfectness, always carries within itself the seeds of failure; that reformation by General Councils broke down, because the moral energy of the few could not contend successfully against the selfishness and the worldliness of the many; that mystic religion, almost always pure and good, cannot spread itself beyond the few souls which have a natural affinity for it. But the characteristic ideas of the Reformation were older than Luther; Wiclif had preached them in England, Hus in Bohemia: a series of Catholic theologians in Germany had attacked indulgences, and expounded justification by faith

in terms almost identical with those afterwards employed by the Saxon reformer. Why was no general effect produced? The answer is, that the Reformation in its wider aspects is part of that greater movement of the human mind, known as the Renaissance; a rebirth, due to the revived study of classical literature and philosophy; a rebellion against mediæval systems of thought, which has issued in modern science and speculation. Without the fresh intellectual activity produced by this movement, and augmented in the fifteenth century by the invention of the art of printing, Luther might have been as ineffectual as Wiclif was. But the time was ripe for change; the seed was cast into the ground at the right moment. Nevertheless, the Lutheran soon separated itself from the purely Humanist movement, and has never since been fully reconciled with it. Lutheranism first, and Calvinism afterwards developed into a Protestant scholasticism, only less fatal to the unrestricted movement of the human mind than that of the Middle Ages. At the same time, on other than Church ground, the tide of free speculation has steadily risen, nor, for the last hundred years, have the gradually decaying bulwarks of dogma been able to oppose any effectual resistance to it. From this point of view, the Reformation was the manifestation of the spirit of the Renaissance in the realm of religion; and Kant, Niebuhr, Ewald, Darwin, are, each on his own line of affiliation, heirs of Luther.

In the following pages I propose to tell the story of the German Reformation from the publication of the Ninety-five Theses in 1517 to the death of Melanchthon in 1560. Even this, however, is a wider subject than I can pretend to treat with equal minuteness in all its parts; the centre point of my narrative will be Saxony, and its principal personages, the Reformers of Wittenberg, with those whom an irresistible attraction drew within their orbit. I shall thus grasp the advantage of a story alive with a single interest, and confined within manageable limits; while at the same time opportunity will be given of illustrating the principles which animated the general movement of reform in Europe. But before I can begin this task, a large preparation must be made. I must attempt to describe the political condition of the Empire at the

beginning of the sixteenth century; to combine into a single picture the various elements of the religious life of Germany about the same period; to follow the story of the revival of classical literature in Germany, and then to analyse the intellectual soil into which the germinal ideas of the Reformation were cast; and in the last place, to tell the story of Luther's life up to the moment of his rebellion against the Church, and to trace his characteristic ideas to their origin in his own inward pains and conflicts. These, then, will be the subjects of four introductory chapters. Should any reader complain that he is long held back from the main interest of the book, let him remember that no great and general movement of the human mind can be understood without careful analysis of the forces which have combined to produce it, and that every stage of intellectual progress presupposes another out of which it has been evolved. The development of human affairs is one continuous web, in which no real breaks answer to the artificial periods into which we divide history.

CHAPTER I

POLITICAL CONDITION OF THE EMPIRE

THE political condition of Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century was due to forces which, although they had been long in operation, had not yet wholly spent themselves. The Carolingian kingdom of the Franks, which had been invested with the succession to the Roman Empire, and had renewed its Imperial character under Otho the Great, was slowly dissolving into a confederacy of States, spiritual and civil, of which the nominal head, in dignity the chief of earthly monarchs, had little power except such as his own hereditary possessions conferred upon him. We find ourselves at a point midway between the comparatively homogeneous kingdom of Charlemagne and the phantom Empire which in 1815 still gave a title to the royal house of Austria. And the disintegration of Germany, at the moment which we are considering, stood in strong contrast to processes of national consolidation which were going on over the rest of Europe. The task of uniting Italy was indeed left for the nineteenth century to accomplish; but Spain had just been constituted by the union of Arragon and Castile under Ferdinand and Isabella: England, gathering strength after the exhaustion caused by the Wars of the Roses, was fast recovering a national consciousness: the breaking up of the Burgundian kingdom, and the absorption of Brittany in the dominions of the House of Valois, gave France a more solid power than it had ever before possessed. Germany alone showed an irresistible tendency to separate into fragments. Every year the centrifugal force grew stronger,

the common bond of union weaker. Nothing ever occurred which arrested for more than a moment the fading of Imperial rights into imposing unreality: everything helped the Electorates, the Principalities, the Dukedoms, on their way to political independence.

The theory of the Empire had, at no moment of mediæval history, been fully carried into practice. According to it the Emperor was the head of the civil as the Pope of the spiritual order. They held the two swords which divided all the power of the world between them: another common metaphor described them as the sun and moon of the intellectual sky. The Emperor claimed more than a titular supremacy over other monarchs: he had inherited the privileges and pretensions of the successors of Augustus. But England and the kingdoms of the Spanish peninsula went on their way in practical independence of him, while he was brought into contact with the growing French kingdom which had its capital at Paris, chiefly on the frontier of Burgundy and Flanders. In Italy, on the contrary, he was always busy. There he was a living force. He went to Rome to be crowned. He was the titular king of the Romans, a monarch often distant and disregarded, but still the symbol of the power which had once made Rome the capital of the civilised earth. In all the throes of the Italian Republics he stood for the general as contrasted with the local order of things, for the State in opposition to the Church. Every now and then an Emperor made the attempt to convert his theoretical into a real supremacy over Italy, but could never long hold his ground: and the chief result was to keep old claims alive in men's minds, and to prepare the way for a fresh assertion of them. But Guelph and Ghibelline were words that represented a very real opposition of political feeling; and the dream that Dante dreamed of an Imperial monarchy, which, in the exercise of its just rights, should heal the woes of Italy by giving it a well-ordered government, shows how strong a hold the idea of the Empire had upon men's minds. But before the beginning of the sixteenth century all this had faded away, and Italy had become only the battle-ground on which the rival ambitions of France and Germany contended for the mastery.

The struggle of the Empire for a territorial hold on Italy was, however, complicated with another, wider in extent and of deeper significance. The relations of the Empire with the Papacy were always peculiarly close. Pipin twice delivered Rome from the Lombards, and was rewarded with the title of Patrician. The coronation of Charles by Leo III (A.D. 800) is "the central event of the Middle Ages."[1] Charles's conquests in Northern and North-Eastern Germany had been made in the name of Christianity: conversion or slaughter was the alternative practically offered to the Saxons. Almost for the first time in the history of Christianity, the civil and the spiritual power are manifestly and happily in accord: the Church is secure under the protection of the Frankish swords, the State borrows the authority, and uses the instruments of the Church. But the relation was changed when, in 962, Otho came down from the Alps with a victorious army, and was crowned Emperor at Rome by John XII. This time it was the State imposing itself upon the Church. "The Pope owned himself a subject; and the citizens swore for the future to elect no Pope without Otho's consent."[2] It was one of the moments at which the Papacy, both politically and morally, was at the lowest ebb; and Popes, set up and deposed by rival factions, and each equally unworthy of rule, obeyed the Emperor's nod.

A little more than a hundred years brings us from John XII to Gregory VII, and the same interval from Otho the Great to Henry IV. We pass from the Emperor receiving an oath of allegiance from the Pope, to the Emperor waiting in the snow, in the castle-yard of Canossa, till the Pope should be willing to see and to absolve a penitent. Even this, however, is hardly the lowest point of submission to which the spiritual reduced the temporal power; that was reached when, before the porch of St. Mark's at Venice, Frederic Barbarossa humbly bowed before Alexander III. The first thing that Henry needed to help him in his contests with his rebellious subjects was the removal of the ban of excommunication, and that once extorted by submission, he flew back to Germany to continue the struggle with vassals and Pope alike. But in the person

[1] Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, 3d ed. p. 50. [2] *Ibid.* p. 88.

of Frederic the Empire, almost at its strongest, came into conflict with the Papacy, and deliberately confessed itself vanquished. It is not necessary in this connection to tell the story, how the edifice of Papal pretensions was gradually built up on the foundation of the pseudo-Isidorian decretals, by astute and resolute Popes; how it was strengthened by the enforcement of clerical celibacy and the influence of the monastic orders; how fortified by men's belief in the unity of the Church and the need of a supreme court of appeal in matters political as well as spiritual; and how it finally crumbled to pieces in the degradation of the captivity of Avignon, and the scandal of the Schism. To do so, would be to undertake the task of epitomising the history of mediæval Europe. The main point we have at present to notice is that in the enforcement of Imperial claims, made real by able and powerful monarchs, reduced to a vanishing point under weak and irresolute ones, the opportunity was missed of consolidating Germany into a homogeneous kingdom. When the Papacy of Gregory VII and Innocent III disappeared from the scene, to give place to that of men like Sixtus IV and Alexander VI, whose base ambition was bounded by the erection of Italian principalities for their sons and nephews, Frederic III and Maximilian were struggling against the impotence of the Empire. And when in the person of Charles V the Empire seemed all at once to rise to its old predominance in Europe, it was only because the Emperor was the hereditary ruler of richer and more powerful States than had ever before been united under one sceptre. Germany, the ancient seat of Empire, was much more his weakness than his strength.

To a considerable extent, the fact that the German monarchy was not hereditary but elective, worked in the same direction. At first sight it might seem as if the periodical selection of the ablest man would tend to establish monarchy on a more stable basis than the chances of hereditary descent. In truth, the two principles were contending for the mastery, with the result, until the claims to Empire of the House of Hapsburg were finally recognised, of arraying two or three great families one against the other, and so giving the ever-watchful Pope his opportunity of interference and aggression.

A weak hereditary monarch has at least this advantage over a chosen king who is otherwise no fitter for rule than himself, that his claim to the throne is unquestioned. So that whatever its other wrongs and sorrows, his kingdom escapes the miseries which arise out of a disputed succession. And while an hereditary king receives his office from his ancestors with its privileges unimpaired, and is under no temptation to impair them, an elective monarch usually begins by buying his own election at the cost of parting with power, and goes on to secure in the same way the supremacy of his house. Then there is the tendency, only too prevailing at some periods of German history, for great feudatories to entrust supreme authority to hands which they know to be too weak to wield it, and thus to secure the growth of their own independence. Nor can anything show more clearly the change which had been fully effected at the beginning of the sixteenth century than the willingness of the electors to bestow the Imperial crown on a prince who, like Charles V, might have fair ground to aspire to universal dominion. The long impotence of Frederic III, and the inability of Maximilian to carry the German States with him in his plans, either of internal organisation or foreign conquest, seem to have convinced them that their sectional independence was fully assured, and that however powerful the Emperor might be outside the Empire, he could do little to disturb the equilibrium into which it had gradually settled. The experience of the next two centuries amply justified this expectation. Germany came out of the Thirty Years' War, the most desolating experience through which a nation ever passed, with her territorial arrangements almost unaltered. Until the new Empire effaced some at least of the old political landmarks, the reigning houses of the nineteenth century were the descendants of the Electors, Princes, Dukes who met Charles V at the Diet of Worms.

We may mark two chief epochs in this growing independence of the States. The first is that of the Pragmatic Sanctions, by which in 1220 and 1232 Frederic II granted the bishops and nobles "legal sovereignty in their own towns and territories, except when the Emperor was present."[1] It is

[1] Bryce, p. 212.

obvious that this was not so much a fresh Imperial grant as a necessary confirmation of rights which had been long growing up, and which it was easier to define than to deny. The second is the Golden Bull of 1356, in which Charles IV settled the Electoral College, to which the choice of the Emperor was thenceforth to be entrusted. Here again, the measure was one which rather defined old and customary than created new rights. The College was to consist of seven persons; and seven persons are mentioned in a letter of Pope Urban IV, of the date of 1265, as having the right of choosing the King of the Romans. These seven are the three great Archbishops of Mainz, Köln, and Trier; while the other four must originally have been the Dukes of the chief tribes which composed the German nation: Franks, Swabians, Saxons, and Bavarians. Retaining the ecclesiastical electors, among whom the Archbishop of Mainz was first in rank, Charles IV gave the four other places in the College to Bohemia, the Palatinate, Saxony, and Brandenburg. With subsequent changes and additions we have here nothing to do; the order established by Charles IV remained unbroken till the Thirty Years' War. The result of this legislation was, in the first instance, the introduction of order into the discharge of an important national function; but it also invested the seven electors with something of the sacrosanct character which belonged to the Empire, and at the same time largely recognised their independence within their own dominions. It established the principle of hereditary succession in the lay electorates; gave all the electors the right of coining money and levying taxes; confirmed the authority and independence of their courts of justice; and placed their persons under the protection of the law of treason. It was another important step in the process which converted Germany from a monarchy into a confederation of States.

A peculiar element was, however, introduced into the political development of Germany by the fact that so many of the feudatories, who were always struggling towards a larger measure of independence, were ecclesiastical. A glance at the map[1] shows that at the beginning of the sixteenth century

[1] See Spruner-Menke, *Handatlas für die Geschichte des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit.* Map 43: *Deutschland im Zeitraum der Reformation.*

one-fourth, perhaps one-third of the country was in the hands of the Church. On the extreme north-east had once been the wide domains of the Teutonic Knights, which, having been seized in 1466 by the kingdom of Poland, afterwards fell in great part to the House of Brandenburg. But on the north-west still stretched in continuous line the dioceses of Bremen, Utrecht, Münster, and Paderborn. The bishopric of Liège occupied a not inconsiderable portion of the Netherlands, while those of Metz and Strassburg covered the French frontier. The great electoral archbishoprics of Köln, Trier, and Mainz ran along the course of the Rhine. In Central Germany, Hildesheim, Halberstadt, Magdeburg, Würzburg, and Bamberg were all ecclesiastical States, while Salzburg and Trent carried the line of clerical fortresses down to the confines of Italy. Wherever the Diet met, three out of the seven electors, who made up the first line of the political hierarchy, were ecclesiastics, while the great bishops successfully held their own with the crowd of minor potentates. This state of things had its origin in the circumstances under which the power of the Frankish kings was first acquired and consolidated. Ecclesiastical went hand in hand with civil organisation. Under Charles Martel and his successors, Boniface, who had received episcopal consecration from Gregory II, at once gave form and order to the Church in Germany, and united it in the firmest bonds of obedience to the Papacy. When Charlemagne pushed the confines of his kingdom into the barbarous regions of the north-east, his subjection of the Saxons was a victory of Christianity over heathenism, and the newly-acquired territory was at once divided into dioceses. Otho pursued the same policy: he confirmed the conquests which his father had made on the Elbe and the Saale by the erection of bishoprics, and when he carried his own victorious arms beyond the former river, he founded the dioceses which he afterwards united under the primacy of Magdeburg.[1] It is not difficult to see how, in these outposts of civilisation, the bishops, who were usually the best representatives of law and order in a time of recurring confusion, gradually arrogated to themselves rights and powers usually associated with sovereignty, and how the Emperor

[1] Ranke, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation*, 3d ed. vol. i. p. 18.

found it convenient to play them off against the turbulent lay potentates by whom they were surrounded. But a distinct step in the process of converting the prelates into civil rulers of their dioceses was taken by Otho the Great, who set the example, followed by many of his successors, of endowing the sees with large tracts of land, to be held as fiefs of the Empire. Nor need we doubt that this process, so conducive both to the honour and profit of the Church, was accelerated by the arts by which ambitious and unscrupulous ecclesiastics have always been wont to prey upon the weaknesses of kings.

It is difficult to sum up in a few sentences the complex effect upon German politics of the existence and gradually consolidating power of these ecclesiastical States. One result was that the struggle between kings and popes for the right of investiture was especially severe in Germany. At first, the bishops were faithful liegemen and submissive subjects of the Emperor. He nominated them; he invested them with their fiefs; he received from them an oath of obedience; where need was, he deposed them. But as, with the growing power of the Pope, the distinction between the temporal and the spiritual elements of episcopal life was more clearly seen, and the independence of the latter more vigorously asserted; as strong pontiffs made claims which weak emperors only feebly resisted, a new loyalty began to dispute supremacy with the old. Nothing is now easier than to see that the status of the bishops was a double one: that as officers of the Church they naturally looked to its head, as feudatories of the Empire, to the Emperor, and that the problem was the old one in a mediæval form, that of rendering to Cæsar the things that be Cæsar's, and to God the things that be God's. But the prize was a great one, and each of the contending parties claimed the whole of it. Could the Pope have sustained his contention, he would have been practically sovereign of a large part of Germany, and that the richest and most civilised; while the Emperor in holding his own was fighting for the integrity of his dominions and the possibility of effectual rule. Canossa was not the last act of the struggle, but only one of its most dramatic episodes; it really came to an end in the Concordat of Worms, concluded in 1122, between Calixtus II and Henry

V, and confirmed in the subsequent year by the First Lateran Council. Like the similar agreements formally or informally made in other parts of Europe, it was a compromise. Episcopal elections were to be free and canonical; investiture of spiritual powers, by ring and pastoral staff, belonged to the Pope, of lands and temporal jurisdiction, by the sceptre, to the Emperor. The double character of the ecclesiastical States was fully recognised, and they were left, free from an overpowering Papal dictation, to play their part in the development of the Empire.[1]

The termination of the struggle of the investitures by no means shut out the Papacy from effectual interference with the affairs of the Church in Germany. Most, however, of the grievances under which it groaned, and which constantly swelled the national cry for reform, were ecclesiastical rather than political, and will be enumerated in another connection. At the same time, what the Emperor lost by the settlement of the controversy, the Pope gained. The former could no longer fill the great sees with creatures of his own will; the latter found that, however they were filled, archbishops and bishops naturally looked to Rome for the inspiration of their policy. But in truth, neither Emperor nor Pope, but the great nobility of Germany reaped the chief advantage of the change. When chapters had it in their power to confer a principality upon one of themselves, it became important that their choice should be properly limited and directed. Presently the usage was established, that all canons and other cathedral dignitaries must be of noble birth; a single class seized upon all the richest and most desirable preferments; the commonalty was left to find what indemnification it could in the monastic orders. One result of this great social change was that the richest sees, the widest dioceses, became the appanages of princely and noble houses; and that whatever political influence the bishops had, went in the same direction as that of their lay kinsmen, and tended to the independence of the Pope and the disintegration of the Empire. But another was that in Germany the Church lost that democratic character

[1] Gieseler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, 3d ed. vol. ii. pt. ii. pp. 64, 65. Milman, *History of Latin Christianity*, 2d ed. vol. iii. p. 215.

which had been throughout the Middle Ages one of its chief glories. Elsewhere it was possible for men of humble birth to rise by genius and piety to the highest ecclesiastical station. A butcher's son might become a cardinal; a fisherman's boy fill the chair of St. Peter. But in Germany cathedral chapters asked quarterings of nobility of candidates for a stall, and bishoprics and archbishoprics were reserved for sons of great houses. Perhaps in a country where, more almost than in any other, loyalty has always taken a personal form, the resulting alienation of the people from the Church was less than might have been expected; but the fact remains that the bishops took their natural place with the princes, mingled in their intrigues, and furthered their policy. Still, throughout the whole of these slow changes, a peculiar connection of the Empire with the Papacy was officially recognised. One contrast of a vivid kind will illustrate this. In England, that a legate should land upon its shores was an offence against the law. Wolsey's legatine authority was treacherously, but still legally avenged, not only upon him but upon the whole English clergy. In Germany, whenever the Emperor opened a Diet, a Papal legate stood as a matter of course by his side.[1]

A powerful influence on the development of the independence of the German principalities was exercised by the revived study of the Roman or civil law. The memory of that law had indeed never perished; and it had lain, unseen, at the basis of many institutions; but it was in the twelfth century that it began to be studied with eager zeal in the universities of Italy. Hence it spread as a recognised branch of education to Paris, to Orleans, to Oxford, to the universities of Germany; everywhere professors were surrounded by crowds of students, and a knowledge of the Pandects, and of the comments upon them, came to be regarded as the necessary equipment for what we should now call public life. There was even a superstitious reverence for it: it was regarded as the essence of ancient wisdom; it was pure reason reduced to writing; it was a system of jurisprudence always and everywhere applicable, from whose decisions there could be no appeal. At first, the

[1] Ranke, vol. i. p. 46.

influence of the study was favourable to Imperial claims in Italy and elsewhere. The civil law assumed the shape in which it has come down to modern times, under the later Empire, at a time when Roman society had long learned to submit itself to an absolute master, and the traditions of republican liberty and self-government were all but forgotten. "Absolutism," it has been well said, "is the civilian's creed:"[1] an absolutism, too, which presupposes a servile basis of society. But when the civil law had made its way into Germany, when, by the exactness of its prescriptions, the logical coherence of its structure, the facility with which it could be quoted and applied, it had overborne the hereditary customs, the undigested codes which it found in possession of the field; when the jurists, who were full of it, came by their superior fitness for such functions to be the trusted servants of princes, and formed a kind of legal bureaucracy, it became an instrument for consolidating the powers of the local rulers, and in like manner for diminishing that of the Emperor. Logically, perhaps, the jurist who filled an important post in Saxony or Brandenburg was bound by his system to make much of the Emperor, who stood theoretically in the place of Augustus or Justinian; but his own employer was nearer to him, and represented the monarchical principle with a more practical force. And as Imperial Italy had been cultivated by slaves, the same influence which magnified the uncontrolled prerogative of the prince, tended gradually to depress the peasant into the serf.

The enumeration of the electorates, spiritual and temporal, of the princely houses of the second rank, and of the great bishoprics, by no means exhausts the elements of the German political system. There were noble families of less consideration, but each independent in its own territory, making war and concluding peace in accordance with ancestral custom, and exercising right of life and death over its own subjects. Some of these, by fortunate marriages or chance of inheritance, were slowly consolidating their power; others, in obedience to the unwritten law, which placed all sons of great houses on the same footing, were being weakened by subdivision of territory. Below these

[1] Bryce, p. 256.

again were the free knights, who also claimed an independence, which now seems strangely inconsistent with the first principles of organised society. Perched on their rocky eyries, often so placed as to command the chief channels of trade, and owning no superior but the Emperor, usually distant, and without the means of enforcing his will upon rebellious subjects, they made war upon one another in pursuance of ancestral feuds, or swooped down upon the merchants of the free cities, whom they at once despised and plundered. It had been counted an advance in civilisation when the right of private war was at once recognised and limited: when one of these petty potentates was compelled to send a letter of feud to an enemy, and to give him notice of intended attack, it was an improvement upon the time when every man's hand was against every other, and the reign of turbulence and bloodshed never ceased. Such was Götz von Berlichingen, the hero of Goethe's earliest drama, who lived to take part in the Peasants' War of 1525; such, Franz von Sickingen, who in the last years of Maximilian became a power in Germany, making himself a terror at home and concluding alliances abroad. In the attempts to reorganise the Empire, which occupied so much thought and effort at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, it is instructive to note how the first thing desired was the establishment of peace in the land, unmolested intercourse between city and city, protection against robbery and violence, the succour of the weak from the lawlessly strong. It came at last, but not in the way that was expected. The invention of gunpowder was the first great agent in introducing order into Germany, for cannon made mediæval castles useless.

But the territorial disintegration of Germany had introduced a new and beneficial element into the national life, by allowing the rise and growth of the free cities. These were of two classes: those which stood in immediate connection with the Empire, and were practically independent republics; and those which, while owning some dependence upon spiritual or temporal princes, had yet conquered for themselves a large measure of self-government. The local distribution of the former, which is curiously unequal, depended upon the circumstances which attended the dissolution of the old tribal dukedoms. Wherever

some powerful house was able to seize upon the inheritance, free cities were few: wherever the contrary was the case, they sprang up in abundance. In Swabia and on the Rhine there were more than a hundred: Franconia, on the contrary, counted only Nürnberg and five smaller cities: Westphalia, Dortmund and Herford: while in Bavaria, Regensburg stood alone. To the second class of partly dependent cities belonged, among many others, Magdeburg, Halberstadt, Hildesheim, Erfurt, Würzburg, and Bamberg, all under Episcopal patronage; Dantzig and Königsberg in the territory of the Teutonic order, and such as are now known as the chief towns of Brandenburg, Hesse, Saxony, and Austria. In these the degree of autonomy varied, but in the more independent of them life was practically the same as in the Imperial free cities. These were self-governed, under constitutions in which the aristocratic and the democratic elements mingled in various proportions: they provided for their own defence: they were republics, in the midst of States where the personal will of the ruler counted for more and more. At Frankfurt the Emperor was chosen; at Aachen he was crowned. At Augsburg, Worms, Speier, Nürnberg, Regensburg, Constanz, diets were held which have left a permanent mark on German history. Köln, Basel, Erfurt, were the seats of famous universities. Nürnberg was at once the Venice and the Florence of Germany, the emporium of trade and the home of art: Augsburg was a centre of European finance. In these cities the refined and luxurious civilisation, to which the princes were indifferent, and on which the knights waged predatory war, found expression in the pursuit of letters and the cultivation of the arts of life. There, too, the Imperial feeling, which was elsewhere slowly dying out of the land, retained much of its force. The cities held, so to speak, directly of the Empire, to which they looked for protection against powerful and lawless neighbours, and they felt that their liberties and privileges were bound up with the maintenance of the general order. Some of them stood on terms of special friendship with this or that Emperor: Maximilian was jocosely called the Burgomaster of Augsburg. In them, too, as we might naturally expect, religious life put on a freer aspect. In the Middle Ages they were the chosen

home of the secret sects, which worked beneath the surface of society; and when the Reformation came, they accepted the new ideas eagerly, yet, for the most part, after a fashion of their own.

Such were the heterogeneous elements of which the Empire was composed, when in the reign of Maximilian, which extended from 1493 to 1519, strenuous attempts were made to arrest the progress of political disintegration. The fifty-three years during which his father Frederic III had worn the Imperial crown (1440-1493) had reduced the estimation of the Empire both in and out of Germany to the lowest. For twenty-five years—nearly half of his long reign—he never appeared in the Empire at all, or interfered in its affairs except by letter; and when he came it was as a fugitive, glad to accept the hospitality, now of a great monastic house, now of a free city. He spent the larger part of his life in his hereditary dominions, letting things go as they would in the greater monarchy of which he was the titular head. Whatever disorder arose in the Empire, whatever infringements were made upon his own dignity or the rights of any confederate State, he had no power, even if he had the will, to interfere: had his character entitled him to higher respect, his poverty and helplessness would have condemned him to contempt. He was kind-hearted; was not without a slow, sarcastic good sense, took an interest in the science of the day. Perhaps as a ruler his best quality was a quiet persistence, which forbad him to give up any right, and helped him to endure misfortune with patience: but no man was ever less in his place upon a throne, no monarch could look back upon a longer career of failure. His one stroke of luck was in marrying his son Maximilian to Mary, daughter and heiress of Charles the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and in procuring his election (1486) as King of the Romans. By this act, if he did nothing to consolidate the Empire, he at least founded the fortunes of his own house, and made it possible that, in a few years more, it should aspire to universal dominion.

Maximilian was full of schemes of conquest. Brilliant, versatile, drawing men's eyes upon himself by shining personal qualities, exciting larger expectations than his solid abilities

enabled him to gratify; gracious to literary men, whose imaginations he touched, and with an ambition to distinguish himself in authorship, he plunged into the mid-stream of European politics, aspiring much more to extend the boundaries of the Empire than to consolidate its power or to remedy its grievances. Of the inheritance of Mary of Burgundy, Louis XI had seized on Provence: but Maximilian still held —as guardian of his infant son—the richest part, Flanders and Holland, which, with his hereditary dominions in Austria, which he had rescued from the grasp of Hungary, gave him an independent foothold outside the Empire. He had many projects. He wanted to be crowned at Rome, like his father, and others of his predecessors, more illustrious. He dreamed of a crusade to push back the Turks, of which, as Emperor, he would be the natural leader. He desired to reassert the claims of the Empire over Milan, and once and for ever, to expel the French from that fair and fertile duchy. Mary of Burgundy died after a brief union, leaving a son and a daughter to share her rich inheritance: and then Maximilian planned a marriage with Anne of Brittany, the heiress of the last great feudal appanage, not united to the Crown of France. But this, like most of his schemes, ended in failure: Charles VIII carried off the prize, and France, with but trifling exceptions, was thenceforth a homogeneous kingdom. Indeed nothing that this brilliant and adventurous politician ever put his hand to was greatly successful. He was not crowned at Rome; he led no crusade against the Turks: under his rule the Swiss Confederacy broke away from the Empire. Poland, in his father's time, had absorbed a large part of the domain of the Teutonic Knights, and he did nothing to recover it; the Slavonian monarchies pressed hard upon the Eastern frontier of Germany; he waged futile war on Venice; he was obliged to accept Louis XII as Imperial feudatory in Milan. It was partly his own fault, but partly too, that he and his German subjects were intent on different and irreconcilable objects.

Projects of internal reorganisation and reform had long occupied men's minds in Germany. High hopes had been entertained of Albert II, in whom the House of Hapsburg, after a long interval, reascended the throne: but he reigned

only two years, and was succeeded by Frederic III. Even under that dreary rule of incapacity, an attempt had been made to introduce a better state of things, by Nicholas of Cues, better known as Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, a very remarkable man, who felt, on almost every side, the wrongs and weaknesses of his age, and endeavoured to remove them. His ideas of reform were the same as were in part reduced to practice some decades later: frequent Diets, an improved representation of the estates; the division of the Empire into circles, each under a head, appointed by, and responsible to the Emperor; a better administration of justice, troops to enforce the solemn sentences of Imperial authority, and money, raised by general taxation, to pay them.[1] But Nicholas of Cues died in 1464, and it was reserved for another great churchman, Berthold, Elector Archbishop of Mainz, to attempt to embody ideas similar to his in the constitution of the Empire. The story of many Diets, of schemes carried but partially into effect, of compromises between the Emperor and the estates, cannot be here told, even in the briefest way. What the reformers wanted was a better internal organisation of the Empire; what Maximilian desired was to have the Empire, in men and money, at his back in his adventurous schemes of conquest. Neither party accomplished much: the supplies which Maximilian received were ludicrously small: the reforms to which he unwillingly submitted were never fully carried out: his wars ended in failure, and the disintegration of the Empire was hardly checked.

It will, however, be necessary to note what the proposed reforms were, and to explain why they came to so little. First, there was a loud demand for the cessation of civil war, and the proclamation of peace in the land. Next, it was required that an Imperial court of justice should be constituted, and permanently settled in one place, so as to be easy of access to all complainants. Thirdly, men asked that some kind of "Reichsregiment" or Imperial Council should be established, which should represent the Emperor in his frequent absences, and take measures for the general good. Both the last demands were displeasing to Maximilian; to such a court of justice as

[1] Ranke, vol. i. p. 79 *et seq.*

has been mentioned, he preferred one attached to his person, and presided over by his own servants; and he justly thought that it would be difficult to prevent the "Reichsregiment" from encroaching on his Imperial prerogatives. I cannot enumerate the various forms taken by either proposal; it is enough to say that both were finally adopted. But the success of the whole plan hinged upon the raising of the money necessary to carry it out. Judges must be paid. Troops must be levied, if order was to be enforced within the Empire, or the Emperor supported in his warlike projects beyond its bounds. But in whatever form the attempt was made it failed. Taxes could not be collected, even though an appeal was made to the faithful to aid in a crusade against the Turks. When the States were required to furnish soldiers for the Imperial army, in a fixed ratio to population, the command was quietly disobeyed. Except in isolated instances, and these chiefly among the cities, Imperial feeling was dead. Princes cared for their own aggrandisement; burghers for their civic republics; the Empire was little more than the shadow of a great name, and Maximilian an Austrian prince, fighting for Austrian or Burgundian purposes. Here and there a humanist, like Wimpheling, fresh from the study of Greek and Roman history, was impassioned for his country's greatness; here and there a statesman, like Berthold of Mainz, thought it possible to compass a much-needed reform on these lines. But how completely the idea of a German Emperor of a German Empire had faded from men's minds was shown when, on Maximilian's death, more than one Elector shamelessly sold his vote to Francis I.

This, then, was the Germany on which Martin Luther opened his eyes in 1483, and in the midst of which he was brought up. The Empire was still an object of popular pride; the idea prevailed that to Germany belonged a primacy among European nations, of which the Emperor was a visible symbol. But Imperial institutions were rather a vague tradition of the past than the basis on which political life really rested; and what loyalty men felt was much more to their immediate ruler, or to the civic republic in which they lived, than to a distant and for the most part invisible monarch, whose political activity was manifested more beyond the limits of the Empire

than within them. Even as an European power, the Empire was shrinking both in territory and in influence. The fall of Charles the Bold, and the division of the Burgundian lands, brought it face to face with France, which by the acquisition of Dauphiné in 1457, and of Provence in 1486, drew nearer to Switzerland, and gained an access to Italy. Beyond the Alps, neither Frederic III nor Maximilian had any real hold; after 1500 the Swiss Confederation must be looked upon as practically independent; Poland had absorbed territory in the far North-East which had once been under German rule. Behind the Slavonian kingdom, however, was a danger greater than itself. The Turks, who had taken possession of Constantinople in 1453, were continually pushing their arms westwards; and before many years have passed will be found thundering at the gates of Vienna. To the Emperor, if his primacy among monarchs meant anything, belonged the task of defending Europe against the Mussulman; over all the Empire the dread of the Turk perpetually hung, while the House of Hapsburg, whose hereditary dominions were first threatened, felt the common fear with peculiar vividness. An appeal for aid against the Turk was the one thing that stirred the imagination and quickened the loyalty of Germans; something of the old crusading feeling was still left, and hatred of the infidel mingled in men's minds with instincts of self-defence.

Within the Empire, local dynasties were waxing and waning; lay and clerical interests alternately gaining and losing ground, without any change in the growing incapacity of the central power. In the last decade of the fifteenth century, private wars were still waged, no permanent Imperial court had been organised; even if the ban of the Empire had been pronounced against an offender, there were no means of enforcing it. A powerful potentate might indeed find it to his interest to put down a robber knight, and in so doing to represent himself as the instrument of Imperial authority, as a few years afterwards the Elector Palatine united with Philip of Hesse and the Archbishop of Trier to suppress Franz von Sickingen; otherwise men were reluctant to make themselves the executants of an Imperial justice, which might afterwards be invoked against themselves. I have already spoken of the

effect of the invention of gunpowder, and especially of cannon; another revolution in the art of war, which was taking place, worked in the same direction. The feudal militia, the mail-clad knight with his attendants, was being gradually superseded by a trained infantry. War became a profession; there were bands of lanzknechts ready to sell their services to the highest bidder, and generals like George Frundsberg, who on many stricken fields had acquired a knowledge of tactics. Already the Swiss are showing in Italy what can be accomplished by foot soldiery, not only brave, but well armed, well drilled, well manœuvred; and in the next generation the Spaniards will better the lesson. Under these circumstances the robber knight becomes an anachronism; he cannot keep the field against the new troops, and his stronghold is battered about his ears. In all matters military, Europe is passing into a new era.

It is obvious that this is a soil in which a new social movement may readily take root, and where it can easily be protected from outward harm, till it is strong enough to protect itself. If Frederic of Saxony chooses to throw the shield of his authority over Luther, who is to execute the sentence of the Empire? If the city of Nürnberg puts down the Mass, and instals the new preachers in the churches, what Catholic power can interfere without setting the Empire in a flame? Charles V was never wanting in will to suppress the Reformation; but sometimes the divisions of Germany and his own lack of Imperial power, sometimes his schemes of universal empire, sometimes the dread of the Turk drew him away; and when at last he addressed himself to the task, he found that he was not strong enough to accomplish it.[1]

[1] For the facts of this chapter I desire to refer, in addition to the works already mentioned, to J. Janssen, *Geschichte des Deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, 7th ed. vol. i., a very able and learned work, though coloured by Catholic prepossession. For the reign of Maximilian I am much indebted to an Essay in the 51st volume of the "Preussische Jahrbücher," by Hans v. Spielberg, *Maximilian I. und das Deutsche Reich*.

CHAPTER II

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF GERMANY

At the end of the fifteenth century the unity of the Church imposed upon the mind of the believer with more than the weight of a law of nature. For this was often broken by miracle: that was always majestically the same. It seemed as if it had been so always and everywhere; the remembrance of ancient heresy and schism had faded away; the Greek Church was distant and had hardly any point of contact with western life; the Bohemian Church, the existence of which a bitter experience had compelled Germany to recognise, was the exception that proved the rule. Elsewhere, all over Europe, insular as well as continental, the same ecclesiastical organisation professed obedience to the same head: worship was conducted according to the same rites in the same sacred language, and one form of doctrine asked for universal assent. The Church was the bond which to some extent united rival kingdoms and contending dynasties into one commonwealth: religion gave the type of the common as distinguished from the national life: do what he would, the Pope could not narrow himself to be merely the head of an Italian State; a kind of European presidency was involved in the very conception of his office. The universality of the great monastic orders tended in the same direction: wherever the Cistercian, the Dominican, the Franciscan went, he found himself equally at home, and the provincial organisation of each order culminated in the ecclesiastical capital of Europe. Since the suppression of the Albigensian heresy in the thirteenth century, the Church

had been generally successful, both in imposing an external uniformity upon Christendom, and in converting to her own uses forces which might otherwise have wasted themselves in rebellion and schism. Whatever elements of sectarian life existed were hidden from common view. And when a reformer threatened to arise, impatient of old dulness, and thrilling with a sense of grievance, the Church was adroit in casting her nets about him, and compelling him to work within her pale, and in obedience to her prescriptions.

This vast and imposing unity was organised on well-defined principles. The power of the Papacy, which varied from little more than an honorary presidency over the Church to a spiritual supremacy, claiming the largest rights and exercising the amplest privileges, rested partly on documents, which an uncritical age rashly accepted as genuine, partly on a body of precedents, which had been slowly accumulated by a succession of astute and ambitious Pontiffs. But the influence of the Church as a whole made itself felt in Europe, because it was interwoven with every web of national and individual life. From the time when the northern tribes descended upon the Roman Empire, submerging and threatening to destroy the old society, the Church had been the great restraining, organising, civilising force. In Italy, in Gaul, in Spain, it had converted the barbarians, taught them, supplied to them the desire and the forms of settled life. In Germany, Frankish conquest and Christian organisation had gone hand in hand. The civil and the religious elements of society were everywhere inextricably intertwined. The bishop stood side by side with the earl, the primate was inferior only to the king. Literature, education, all but the simpler arts of life were chiefly clerical. It is impossible to say how much agriculture owes to the monks who went out into the silent wilderness to plant and to till: or architecture to the monastic builders of cathedrals and convents. It is true that these great services to society were not rendered without some corresponding loss. Even in the age of Augustine and of Jerome, Christianity had begun to dissociate itself from classical literature. The first of these great men bewailed the hours which he had lost with Homer: the second received angelic chastisement because he was more a

Ciceronian than a Christian: before long it was possible for Gregory the Great to rebuke a bishop for wasting his time upon grammatical studies. So the rich inheritance of the past was gradually abandoned: ancient philosophy fell into the same neglect as ancient poetry and history: whatever had the mark of Paganism upon it was condemned as unworthy of Christian attention.

But although some ages may achieve a more brilliant intellectual result than others, the activity of the human mind varies much less than is commonly taken for granted, and there are no idle centuries. The period before the rise of vernacular literature in Europe—when Christianity, having cut itself off from the old Greek tradition, had driven science to take refuge among the Moors in Spain—was one of intense philosophical activity. Nothing strikes the student more than the way in which metaphysical discussions, which now interest only a chosen few, formed the staple of the higher education, and attracted to mediæval universities crowds of eager disciples. But philosophy too suffered the universal impress of the Church. It was not an independent speculation on the nature of things, an attempt to conceive of the universe as a reasoned whole, so much as a conversion of Christian teaching into a logical form, and a representation of it, therefore, as universal and self-consistent truth. The aim of the schoolmen was to show that Christianity was identical with the results of sound knowledge and right-thinking: in other words, to make religion philosophical and philosophy religious. Beginning with the threefold material afforded by Scripture, tradition, and the Fathers, all accepted, though as having different degrees of certitude, on the authority of the Church, they built up, with the assistance of the Aristotelian logic, a vast system of belief, into which was incorporated, as time went on, whatever popular prejudices grew into faiths, and gradually hardened into doctrines. The method was eminently one that lent itself to processes of development. And the result was not only that the theological teaching of the Church assumed, both in its larger outline and lesser details, a reasoned form, which added to the weight of its influence, but that all speculation was conducted with a distinct reference to ecclesiastical authority, and on lines which the Church had sanctioned. The Church was supreme, not in the

domain of theology alone. It imposed itself, with almost equal force, upon every part of the intellectual activity of Europe.

The theological system, which thus presented itself to the mind of Europe in the strength of long prescription, boldly claimed an indefeasible authority. The Church was an interpreter of the mind and will of God, from whose decision there was no appeal. Her bishops and priests were the successors of the Apostles: it was a common phrase to call the Pope the Vicegerent of Christ. There was no competing authority: the Bible was known only through the medium of the Church, which vouched for it and interpreted it. If a man would be religious, this was the only way open to him, unless indeed an imperious intellectual necessity drove him into paths of secret heresy. And the doctrine of the Church was that sacraments were the chief, and certainly the indispensable nourishment of the religious life, and that they could be administered only by a duly ordained body of priests. It is not necessary at this moment to give accurate definitions of the word "sacrament" and the word "priest": they stand for co-ordinated ideas, and the outcome of the system which they denote is, that what some would call a way of communication, others a wall of hindrance, is built between the soul and God. For grace, spiritual life, the satisfaction of religious needs, as well as for the ruder substitutes for these things, with which commoner natures are content, the believer is dependent upon the Church in the person of her servants. Apart from the Church, he has no access to God; she can at any moment thrust him into the outer darkness. And when we consider how these intermediaries between God and the soul, once set up, tend to multiply, how Mary takes the place of Christ, and the intercession of saints becomes useful and almost necessary; when we recollect how the externality of sacraments impresses itself upon the whole practical system of which they form a part, giving virtue to relics, merit to pilgrimages, worth to crosses, and scapularies, and medals, it is clear how a network of belief and observance is woven round the disciple, through which it is almost impossible that he should break. Nor is this hold of the Church upon him confined to this world: she keeps the keys of the vast treasury of supererogatory merit, and can bind and loose in purgatory as

on earth. So that for all good, the believer was the suppliant of the Church. She led him, she fed him, she imposed her laws upon him; she rewarded him upon her own terms. He accepted her word for everything; she was the perpetual, the all-powerful mediator between heaven and earth. Without her there was no access to God; no spiritual life now, no salvation hereafter.

And the Church was omnipresent. In the cities the most conspicuous, the most ornate, the stateliest building was the cathedral, upon whose yet unfinished splendour the efforts of many generations had been expended, and where religious rites were performed with a perfection of impressive beauty to which every art contributed. Round it were grouped many churches more, parochial and conventual, each stately and splendid in its degree, and each offering its special attraction to the worshipper. In every village and hamlet rose a more modest edifice, yet in its modesty surpassing the secular buildings which surrounded it; often the memorial of the liberal piety of some great house, or the monument of a bitter sorrow or an inexpiable sin. The greater or lesser monasteries stood apart, each in its own domain the home of a community, which, if rarely learned and often lax in morals, usually diffused about it material prosperity and an atmosphere of social goodwill. Distinct from the parochial clergy, and not always on the best terms with them, the friars, black, white, and gray, were at home in every parish, and did not suffer the claims of the Church, as represented in their own persons, to be long unheard or unheeded. The universities were in the hands of the clergy: in diets, parliaments, estates the bishops and mitred abbots sat with the great nobles; ecclesiastics, as almost the sole possessors of the necessary learning, were judges, ministers, diplomatists. More than any other single person the Pope was the pivot of international policy in Europe, while there was certainly no country in which he did not constantly make his influence felt. The Church was the characteristic, the inspiring, the formative element of mediæval life. If any man evaded her friendliness it was only to encounter her hostility. To live apart from her on terms of bare neutrality was impossible.

The wealth of the Church was enormous, and nowhere greater than in Germany. The recollection of how ecclesiastical property in England had accumulated, at the time of the Reformation, under the restrictions of a severe act of mortmain will help us to conceive what it must have been where no such legislation was in force. Wealth, held by the dead hand, escapes most of the usual chances of division and dispersion, while it is constantly increased by the goodwill or the fears of the pious. The splendour to which this wealth ministered was in part public property; only a stern reformer here and there objected to the jewelled croziers, the embroidered vestments, the domestic pomp, the lavish hospitality of bishops, while the lands of the Church were usually administered in a liberal and kindly way. All this, it is true, was the reverse of apostolic, but until the Bible was released from its imprisonment in the ancient tongues, and given to the people by the printers, there was no primitive model with which to compare it. And in Germany, as has been already stated, the wealth of the Church combined with its political power to give it a position of peculiar influence. The three ecclesiastical electorates, as well as the greater bishoprics, filled an important place in the political hierarchy. Not only the prelates themselves, but the chapters by whom they were elected were of noble birth, sharing the prejudices and devoted to the interests of the order to which they belonged. Almost every conceivable force worked together to lower the spiritual character of the great German bishops. That some of them cared for learning, and patronised men of letters, is hardly a fact on the other side; it is equally true of Cardinal Albert of Mainz and of Leo X. A bishop really zealous for godliness was a much rarer thing.

It was long since the occupant of the Fisherman's Chair had conciliated any moral respect. The public and private vices of Popes were matters of notoriety; only self-seeking and self-indulgence were expected of them; all Popes alike, even those whose offences against decency and morality were least flagrant, were recognised as obstacles to necessary reform. Perhaps the exile at Avignon, which lasted from 1305 to 1370, may be taken as the epoch at which the Papacy most decisively drew public contempt upon itself; there had been evil

Pontiffs before, but none that had so dragged their office in the mire of political subservience. And from this decline in general esteem, made more marked by the scandals of the Schism, the Papacy never recovered till the Counter-Reformation placed a line of Popes in the Chair, who, whatever else they were, were austere and ascetic men. Two causes combined to make the Popes of the Reformation period, from Sixtus IV to Paul III, a by-word in the history of Christianity. One was the absorption of Papal energies in the task of building up a temporal dominion in Italy, varied, as in the case of Alexander VI, by the desire of the Pope to carve out independent principalities for his own children; the second, the paganising influence of the new culture upon minds empty of faith in either God or man. I do not mean that these were the sole or even the most efficient causes of Papal sin and shamelessness; but that, superadded upon others that had been long at work, they gave to sin a peculiar blackness, to shamelessness an unapproachable audacity. There is something frightful in the contrast between the theoretical sanctity of the Papal office and the very practical worldliness and wickedness of the men who filled it. Sixtus IV, Innocent VIII, Alexander VI, Julius II, Leo X, Clement VII are names that are inscribed in the book of human infamy as a page by themselves. The annals of no secular State can show such a succession of rulers, profligate, self-seeking, cruel, dead to all higher responsibilities of government; a succession—except for the few months during which Adrian VI tried to cleanse the Augean stable—without a break. A mediæval story tells how a Jew, going to Rome, was converted to Christianity by the sight of the wickedness that he saw there. No system, he thought, that did not enjoy the direct protection of heaven could live under the weight of such abominations.[1] In like manner, that the Popes of the Renaissance did not of themselves pull down the Church, of which they were the head and representatives, is the strongest possible testimony to the tenacity of its hold upon the habits, the affections, the superstitions of the people.

Popes of the great order, such as Gregory VII, Alexander

[1] This story forms the subject of the second novel, of the first day, of Boccaccio's *Decamerone*. It is also told by H. Bebel in his *Facetiæ*.

III, Innocent III, had made it their aim to establish a European supremacy; they had entered upon wide schemes of policy; they had bearded emperors and kings; they had attempted to turn the currents of national development. But when the Papacy fell from its high estate, its interference with the affairs of the various European kingdoms was of a pettier, yet perhaps more irritating kind. It revived old, and invented new claims to a universal supervision of the Church, every one of which had for its object partly the centralisation of ecclesiastical government, but much more the exaction of tribute and the extension of patronage. This was particularly the work of the fourteenth century, during the greater part of which the Popes in exile at Avignon were politically the creatures of the French monarchy. The basis of these Papal claims was the Canon Law, which about the year 1140 had been collected by Gratian, an Italian monk, into his *Decretum*, a book which in form and arrangement was an imitation of the Pandects. But in the course of the next century this was added to and developed, under the direction of successive Popes, until it became a regular system of ecclesiastical jurisprudence, founded upon the pseudo-Isidorian decretals, and comprising all the judgments which the Supreme Pontiffs had given in favour of their own jurisdiction, all the bulls which they had issued in extension of their own claims. The mendicant orders, which depended directly upon the Pope, spread the doctrine of his supremacy through Europe; and Thomas Aquinas, the great Dogmatist of the Church, who was a Dominican, laid it down in terms at once ample and precise. The climax of all was that Boniface VIII[1] solemnly declared that to believe in the subjection of every human creature to the Pope was a thing necessary to salvation. Upon this broad basis of principle was erected a very comprehensive and well compacted edifice of practice.

In the first place, jurisdiction over clerics belonged only to clerics, and by final appeal to Rome. This was the theory: that in every country of Europe it was more or less successfully resisted, and criminal clerks brought under the cognisance of

[1] The words of the Pope are "Subesse Romano Pontifici, omni humanae creaturae declaramus, dicimus, definimus, et pronunciamus omnino esse de necessitate salutis," quoted by Maurenbrecher, *Studien und Skizzen zur Geschichte der Reformationszeit*, p. 293, etc.

the civil magistrates, need not be said. But there were offences which were supposed to belong to the ecclesiastical courts by right, whether committed by clerks or laymen, and contentions which could be finally decided only by Rome. Among the former were adultery, fornication, bigamy, heresy, blasphemy, perjury, usury; among the latter all legal questions relating to marriage. Upon these the Pope assumed to legislate in a variety of minute and often arbitrary edicts. Side by side, however, with the enacting, ran the dispensing power—the authority that decreed the law could absolve from its obligation; and dispensations were a matter of influence bought or backed with money. A costly dispensation was necessary to enable a powerful monarch to marry a distant kinswoman, or to break an oath which he had sworn to his subjects or an ally; a cheap one, if a pious merchant wanted to eat meat in Lent, or a humble parish priest to retain in his house the wife who went by a less honoured name. The Papal official was ready in either case, and the tariff regulated on strictly commercial principles. In the same category with the traffic in dispensations must be placed the sale of indulgences, of which I shall speak more at length in another connection. Neither the abuse nor the protest against it was new in 1517; among others, John XXIII had flooded Europe with these commodities; and John Wessel, in the generation before Luther, had assailed the theological theory on which this base commerce was founded. Then there was taxation of a more direct kind: the tithes, the Peter's pence, the contributions raised in support of a crusade against the infidels, but often spent on other objects; the annates, the year's income of a benefice, demanded of each fresh incumbent; the pall money, which metropolitans were expected to pay in exchange for the tippet of white wool, which was the symbol of their jurisdiction. More burdensome on the one hand, more profitable on the other, were perhaps the encroachments which the Popes were perpetually making on the patronage of national churches. Appeals as to disputed elections of bishops were carried to Rome; every episcopal election was supposed to need Papal confirmation; how easy to set aside a disagreeable nomination, and to fill the place with a favoured candidate! Little by little the Popes assumed the right of direct patronage; by

means of what were called provisions, reservations, and the like, they appropriated to themselves the best sees, the richest prebends; while princes often found it the easiest way of infringing the rights of chapters in their own interests to strike a bargain with Rome. The history of mediæval England is full of this struggle, in which victory now inclines to this side, now to that, according as the monarch is sufficiently self-denying and patriotic to take part with his people against the Pope. But at the best, the result was that much of the richest preferment in England, and still more in Germany, was in the hands of Italian ecclesiastics, and that the wealth of the national church was devoted to keep up the shameless luxury of Rome.

These exactions and abuses, of which the above is only a feeble and general outline, were nowhere more grievous than in Germany, nowhere more bitterly felt. Germany was the milch cow of the Papacy, which it at once despised and drained dry. The Emperor Maximilian, always at his wit's end for money, ruefully declared that the Roman Curia drew from Germany a revenue an hundred-fold greater than his own.[1] At Constanz, at Basel, these abuses had been represented in the strongest terms, but without obtaining any efficient redress. The only result had been concordats, which, while appearing to remedy some of the most objectionable usages, had legalised and confirmed the rest. At the beginning of the sixteenth century formal remonstrances were constantly made by Germany to the Papal See. The Diet hardly met without taking into consideration the grievances of the ecclesiastical system. Those which assembled at Augsburg in 1500, in 1510, and again in 1518, all uttered the same complaint. Even at the famous Diet of Worms in 1521, which may be said to have been held in the interests of the Papacy, gravamina against the Pope and the clergy were lodged with the young Emperor, with a request that he would use his influence for their redress. By this time the general feeling of wrong was rising to fever heat. In Ulrich von Hutten's dialogue, *Vadiscus, seu Trias Romana*,[2] published in 1520, in which he discharges all his hatred of Rome in one lightning flash of

[1] Ranke, vol. i. p. 43. Böcking, vol. iv. p. 145 *et seq.* See
[2] Ulr. Hutten's *Opera Omnia*, ed. especially p. 157 *et seq.*

epigrammatic invective, there is manifest a strong feeling of irritation against the quick-witted and insolent Italians, who did not care to conceal their contempt of the nation which they plundered. More and more the protest against the administrative system of Rome grew to be a matter of German patriotism, quite independent of nascent doctrinal differences, until at the Diet of Nürnberg in 1522-1523, the Legate Chieregati, asking why the Edict of Worms had not been enforced against Luther, was answered by the production of one hundred gravamina, a long and heavy bill of indictment against the Church, which it was demanded should be tried by a national council, to be held within a year, in a German city, under the presidency, not of the Pope but of the Emperor.[1] Abuses of every kind, dispensations, indulgences, patronage, jurisdiction, spiritual pains and penalties, are here enumerated with cumulative effect. And the document, drawn up, it must be remembered, by representatives of Catholic States, only one or two of which were beginning to be affected by the breath of Lutheran reform, leaves upon the mind the impression of a system full of sordid corruption, and worked for the conscious purpose of extracting money from a superstitious and subservient people.

Another constant complaint was of the immorality of the clergy. Nor is this merely to be taken of offences against the law of clerical celibacy; that was a thing confessed. All mediæval literature from the time of Gregory VII, when the obligation of abstinence from marriage began to be rigorously enforced on the parochial clergy, down to the Reformation, is full of this subject. It is treated in every variety of tone; it is made the topic of grave rebuke and fiery invective; it furnishes plentiful material for satire; it is woven into the stuff of popular novels; it embodies itself in proverbs; it gives rise to decrees of synods and councils innumerable. In Germany, at the end of the fifteenth century, it seemed as if the contest against invincible propensities of human nature had been given up in despair; from such a prelate, for instance, as Albert of Mainz no one would have expected chastity, and no one thought the worse of him for not practising it; while parish priests every-

[1] Marheineke, *Geschichte der teutschen Reformation*, 2d ed. vol. i. p. 430. The gravamina will be found in Walch, vol. xv. p. 2560 *et seq.*

where openly kept women in their houses, who were wives in all but the name, and the mothers of children whose recognition involved no shame. The fine which was inflicted on such a breach of ecclesiastical discipline, naturally converted itself into a yearly payment for a dispensation; and the laity openly declared that they felt themselves more secure with such a clergy than with one to whom no similar indulgence was shown. But there is no safe middle way between such a rigid self-control as the Catholic clergy, at least in Protestant countries, have in modern times imposed upon themselves, and the legalisation of marriage. A mistress cannot take the place of a wife; nor is it easy to say whether man or woman is more demoralised by a connection which can be terminated at the will or caprice of either, and while it lasts is stigmatised by public opinion. Stress has usually been laid on the degradation brought upon the occupant of a sacred office by this shocking state of things; Luther, with his usual keen insight into human nature, saw the other side strongly. A woman, he said, who sinned with a priest was a lost creature, despair robbed her of all hope of recovery. There was no worse sort of womenfolk than the parson's maid.[1]

The whole system of the Roman Catholic Church is one the character of which depends largely upon the men by whom it is administered. It places enormous power in the hands of the hierarchy. The direction of the conscience, the control over the sacraments, the exercise of the Church's teaching and dispensing authority, the wielding of the sword of discipline, the power of binding and loosing not only on earth but in heaven, are functions which may conceivably be in the hands of a priesthood so wise, so holy, so self-controlled as to be used for the eternal welfare of the community which they govern. It is indeed a spiritual despotism which is thus set up; but a spiritual, like a political despotism, if it cannot call out certain free and generous virtues in those who are subject to it, may yet produce solid fruits of good government. But all despotisms, whether administered by one man or by a privileged class, are fatally dependent upon the character of the despot.

[1] Erl. ed. vol. xxviii. p. 195: "Wider den falsch genannten geistlichen Stand des Papstes und der Bischöfe." 1522.

From an Augustus there may be a rapid descent to a Caligula; a Marcus Aurelius may be followed by a Commodus: nor is the deposit of unlimited power less dangerous to a sacerdotal order than to a single monarch. The Catholic Church strove in vain, throughout the Middle Ages, against the corruptions which inevitably attended the power and the wealth which were poured in upon her. It might almost seem as if, by a kind of divine Nemesis, she became less able to do her supernatural work the more firmly she fixed her claims in the minds of men, and the larger were the resources which she accumulated. All Europe groaned under the exactions, if it did not feel the shame of the Papacy of the Renaissance. And when the impurity of the clerical life shocked the moral sense of Germany, the impression was deepened by the recollection that these priests, whose ignorance and incapacity dragged the people down to their own level, owed their benefices to every kind of irregularity and corruption, and that the Empire was made to contribute to foreign luxury and prodigality the funds that ought to have supported its own religious establishments.

Nothing, however, could be a greater mistake than to suppose that the Latin Church, as a whole, was ignorant of its own weaknesses and corruption, or that it made no steady efforts to remedy them. The history of these attempts is too instructive in relation to the main subject of this book to be wholly passed over in this place, although the treatment of it must necessarily be brief and imperfect.

They are of two kinds. The first are in the nature of a revival of religious life: attempts to put new flesh upon the dry bones of the valley of vision, and to breathe new breath into them. The second proceed upon the assumption that, apart from this, which is a strictly prophetic work, what is needed can be accomplished by fresh laws and more stringent regulations. The establishment of the mendicant orders is an example of the one; the efforts of conciliar reform at Constanz and at Basel a type of the other. But it is a singular and convincing proof of the decadence of the Papal Church, that the first of these methods, which alone carried in it the seed of possible success, was also the earlier in date. There was a great outbreak of the monastic spirit in the first half of the thirteenth

century, which witnessed the foundation of the three great mendicant orders, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Augustinians. But from that time, until the Counter-Reformation called into being the Society of Jesus, the annals of monasticism are comparatively barren. Old orders were indeed reformed, some unimportant monastic communities came into existence, but there was no overpowering rush of enthusiasm for the ascetic life such as drove crowds of eager and devoted adherents to the side of Dominic or of Francis. On the other hand, a General Council was held on the very eve of the Reformation. It was a failure, as all the rest had been; if the spirit was baffled by the inveterate diseases of the Church, how should the letter prevail?

Catholic efforts of revival all took, with more or less rigidity, the monastic form, and their successive failure is due to the inherent weaknesses of monasticism. It sets before men an unnatural and impossible ideal. It substitutes for the social and domestic virtues, upon which the world rests, an ascetic and self-regarding type of holiness. It is the attempt "to wind ourselves too high for sinful men beneath the sky," and so is peculiarly exposed to reaction, laxity, corruption. The story of all monastic orders, truly told, is one of perpetual striving after a holiness which hungers and thirsts after self-denial, and finds no self-maceration too hard; then of slow falling away into formality, idleness, self-indulgence, open vice: and a period once more of enthusiastic reform, and repentant return to the old ideal. Never were orders more bound down to poverty and humility, either by the spirit of their founders or the letter of their statutes, than the Dominicans and the Franciscans; yet, like other older communities, they heaped up boundless wealth, they aimed at ecclesiastical power, they laid hold of the universities, they mounted the Papal Chair; in a word, they changed themselves into something quite different from what they were intended to be. It could not be otherwise. The overbent bow breaks, the pendulum violently drawn to one side swings violently back to the other. None of these monastic reformers introduced—their defenders will say that they could not introduce—a fresh principle of faith into the corruption of the times; yet, in default of such a principle, the successive

movements of reform fell under the law of reaction and extinction. Nor let it be alleged that this necessity of failure attends upon monastic reform only because it sets before itself too high an object. The fault of its ideal is not that it is too lofty, but that it is unnatural. It attempts to develop certain noble instincts of humanity at the cost of suppressing others, which equally have their root in the constitution of man, and to exalt individual holiness, while disparaging social and domestic virtue. But the event has shown often enough, and will show again should the occasion arise, that human society repudiates the monastic conception of goodness as being in essential contrariety to the principles on which it is itself built up.

Many such efforts of monastic reform were made in Germany in the fifteenth century. The two great Councils of Constanz and of Basel could not be quite without effect in this direction. The first movement spread from the Congregation of Regular Canons at Windesheim, near Zwolle, which stood in close connection with the Brethren of the Common Life, of whom we shall hear more presently. John Busch was the reformer. Its second centre was the Benedictine convent of Bursfeld, round which grouped themselves seventy-five others in Saxony, Thuringia, Westphalia, and the Rhineland. Dederich Coelde accomplished a similar work for the Franciscans; Andreas Proles for the Augustinians. The general movement of reform was promoted by that Cardinal Nicholas of Cues, of whom we have already heard in the region of politics. He appeared in Germany in 1451 in the character of a Papal legate, charged with the task of ecclesiastical and, in especial, of monastic reform. He travelled through the whole land, everywhere exhorting to the strict observance of conventual rules, establishing provincial synods, and leaving visitors behind him to see to the continuance of his work. But it is instructive to note that none of these movements of reform is successful in extending itself over a whole order. They limit themselves to the establishment of special congregations within the larger body, having a greater or less cohesion of their own, and bound to a stricter observance of the common rule. It seems as if the time were past at which it was possible for a great wave of enthusiasm to sweep over a monastic community, and

to carry every member of it, even the lax and the vicious, to a higher level of life.

The reformation of the Church in root and branch was the object set before each of the great Councils which were held successively at Pisa, at Constanz, and at Basel. That of Pisa was called in 1409 by the College of Cardinals, for the purpose of putting an end to the Schism which affected Europe with pious horror. That purpose it altogether failed to accomplish; it deposed indeed the rival Popes, and elevated Alexander V to the Papal See in their room; but when Alexander died, after a few months' reign, and John XXIII was elected, there were three Popes instead of two, and the last state of things was worse than the first. Another General Council was summoned to meet at Constanz in 1414. The cry for reform was raised all over Europe; the old grievances remained without a remedy, while in John XXIII the Church had a Shepherd all whose care was for the wolves. The University of Paris, with its Chancellor, John Gerson, headed the party of reform: the Emperor Sigismund took the same side; deputies came together from all parts of Europe. The Council set before itself a threefold object—the reunion of the Church under one Pope; its reformation in its head and in its members; the extirpation of all heretical doctrine. The first was attained in the election of Martin V; the sincerity of the Council in regard to the last was vindicated by the condemnation of John Hus and Jerome of Prague. But the second came to nothing. When once the Council had given itself and the Church a new head in a generally acknowledged Pope, it found that it had lost at once its initiative and its authority. Martin V's first measure was to confirm all the regulations which had obtained in the Papal Chancery, and with them, therefore, the whole series of practical abuses of which the Church so bitterly complained; his next step, to break the force of the general league for reform, by concluding separate concordats with the Transalpine nations. These were unsatisfactory, almost trivial documents; that with Germany, published May 2nd, 1418, was limited in its operation to five years. Cardinals were to be created only in moderate numbers. The Pope placed some restriction on himself in regard to provisions and reservations. Annates

were to be paid on the old valuations; and any valuation which seemed excessive was to be revised. In the matter of commendams, dispensations, the issue of indulgences, promises were made, for the keeping of which no guarantee was offered, while in each case it was left to the Pope to decide upon the necessity of exception to his own rule. The acceptance of this concordat by the German nation, while it seemed to take away a part of the burthen of Papal exaction, really bound the rest more firmly on its back; and at the end of five years everything was as it had been.[1]

Proceedings, similar in kind, though not in detail, followed the Council of Basel, which sat with various interruptions and changes of fortune from 1431 to 1449. Again the conciliar method of reform was found to be impossible, and each nation was left to make its own bargain with Rome. For a brief period it seemed as if Germany, under the leadership of Albert II, was about to seize and to maintain her ecclesiastical liberties. The Diet of Mainz, held in March 1439, solemnly accepted and confirmed the reforming decrees of Basel, which asserted the superiority of General Councils over the Pope, provided for the organisation of provincial and diocesan synods, abolished reservations, annates, and the like brood of Papal exactions, enjoined freedom of election to bishoprics and lesser benefices, and restricted appeals to Rome.[2] But the state of things thus brought about was of short duration. Albert II was succeeded by Frederic III: Nicholas V, a Pope whose authority was neither impugned by a Council nor shared by an Antipope, followed Eugenius IV. The Emperor in his capacity as an Austrian prince, and the electors as territorial sovereigns, were all open to the temptation of bartering away the common liberties for private concessions of patronage. The price was duly paid to each, and in February 1448 was concluded the Concordat of Vienna, which, going back to the ground occupied by the agreement of Constanz, sacrificed almost everything that had been claimed at Mainz. Wherever the Concordat of Vienna differed from the Concordat of Mainz, it was in favour of the Pope. Again the apparent limitation of some rights

[1] Milman, vol. vi. p. 68; Gieseler, vol. ii. pt. 4, p. 38 *note*; Creighton, *History of the Papacy during the period of the Reformation*, vol. i. pp. 405, 406.

[2] Creighton, vol. ii. p. 200.

only confirmed their substantial validity. And presently the German princes found out that it was an easier and more certain way of providing for their ecclesiastical protégés to keep up friendly relations with the Pope, than to trust in the goodwill of chapters.[1]

One more attempt at conciliar reform must be mentioned, less on account of its intrinsic importance than because it was made at the very moment when the storm of the Reformation was about to break on the Papacy. The story may be very briefly told. Ecclesiastical affairs in Germany, in the latter half of the fifteenth century, were conducted on the footing of the Concordat of Vienna, with what result of national dissatisfaction we have seen. Remonstrances, covering always the same familiar ground of grievance, were constantly made, and as constantly disregarded. At last, in the pontificate of Julius II, Maximilian braced himself for decisive action. He was irritated by the Pope's abandonment of him in his war with Venice. Men said that for a moment he entertained the wild project of making himself Pope in succession to Julius. He asked the distinguished humanist and patriot Wimpheling to draw up, on behalf of the German nation, a list of gravamina against the Papacy,[2] and in conjunction with Louis XII called a General Council at Pisa. The invitations to the Council bore the signatures of three cardinals, while six more were understood to approve it. The objects of the Council were the familiar ones: pacification of all Christian peoples, common war against the Turks, extirpation of heresies, and the necessary reformation of the Church.

A few ecclesiastics, chiefly French, assembled at Pisa, but the Council was only a poor shadow of the great assemblies which a century before had drawn upon themselves the attention of Europe. Maximilian himself, with characteristic changefulness, showed no interest in it. When Julius called together the Fifth Lateran Council to meet in Rome in April 1512, he was universally felt to have checkmated his opponents. It sat, first under the presidency of Julius II then under that of Leo X, from 1512 to 1517, and for the reform of the

[1] Creighton, vol. ii. p. 282; Gieseler, vol. ii. pt. 4, p. 101; Maurenbrecher, *St. u. Sk.* pp. 330-336.

[2] Wimpheling's ten gravamina will be found in Gieseler, vol. ii. pt. 4, p. 185 *note*.

notorious evils and scandals of the Church, accomplished nothing. Fra Egidio da Viterbo, the General of the Augustinians, a man of high character and zealous piety, preached a sermon to the Council, in which he laid down the necessity of radical reform: Pico della Mirandola addressed a memorandum to the Pope, in which he made the sensible remark, that if there were any real desire for reform, the old laws of the Church would suffice, without enacting new ones. But beyond the passing of certain perfunctory regulations, which nobody could ever suppose were intended to be carried into practice, nothing was done. The real achievement of the Council was of quite another kind. It procured the abolition of the document known as the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, in which, in 1438, Charles VII had embodied the decrees of the Council of Basel, and which from that time forward had been the charter of the liberties of the Gallican Church. In so doing it renewed and confirmed the Bull, *Unam Sanctam*, in which Boniface VIII had declared the salvation of men to depend on their submission to the Papal See. When the Council separated in 1517 it might have seemed that the Pope was finally triumphant over all national opposition, and that the demand for any reform, save such as was of his own initiation, had been victoriously repelled. Yet it was in 1517 that Luther published the Ninety-five Theses.[1]

A grave injustice would be done to the religious life of Germany if it were forgotten that it was the country of the "Friends of God" and the "Brethren of the Common Life," of Gerhard Groot and Johann Tauler, of the *Theologia Germanica* and the *Imitation of Christ*. It is true that all these, except the last, are manifestations of the fourteenth, not of the fifteenth century; but they had been worked into the stuff of the national mind, and must be counted as permanent factors in its development. In a preliminary sketch like this, it is not possible to tell in detail the story of the mystical sects which lived and worked below the surface of German Catholicism; to describe the precise character of each, and to determine their mutual relations; to decide to what extent one

[1] For the Lateran Council see Maurenbrecher, *Geschichte der Katholischen Reformation*, bk. i. chap. iii. vol. i. pp. 89-118.

slid into pantheism, and another lapsed into immorality. Nor again is it fair to pass on whatever credit attaches to these manifestations to the Protestant movement of the sixteenth century, and to regard them as premonitory, though ineffective efforts of the spirit of reform. Such as they were, for good or evil, they sprang naturally out of Catholicism, and were a part of its life: the Latin Church cannot be justly judged unless Tauler be set by the side of Alexander Borgia, Gerhard Groot by Torquemada. We accomplish nothing in the history of religion by establishing sharp contrasts, which have no counterpart in the reality of things, and overlooking the slow and gradual developments which make the transition from one age to another. Each stage of human progress grows out of one immediately preceding. Even Luther, in all the strength of his brilliant originality, his self-centred will, is the child of his country and his time.

It is the peculiarity of mysticism to be neither Catholic nor Protestant. It aims to soar into a region above that in which ecclesiastical and theological diversities arise. Its method is the direct apprehension of God by the soul, as form, colour, sound, are apprehended by the senses. Mysticism does not argue; it cannot appeal to any external authority; it broods, it meditates, it listens for the Divine voice. When that voice is heard, all others are necessarily silent—Church, Bible, opinions of men. Naturally, the awe of the presence of God, the joyful confidence which results from the consciousness of being taught and led by God, overshadow less lofty emotions; these things are sufficient in their own intensity, and do not suffer minor matters of belief to obtrude themselves. Mysticism penetrates to the ultimate ground of religion, the soul that enjoys God needs and can ask no more. So the works of the mystics are the world's great books of devotion, used by every sect and belonging to none; it would be impossible to say from internal evidence whether the *Theologia Germanica* was written before or after the Reformation, and the *Imitation of Christ*, with some change of phrase, is used in the worship of the Religion of Humanity. Another aspect of the same fact is that mystics arise in every Church, and form none. The mystic's attitude to religion is a matter of natural endowment;

he has nothing that he can impart to a soul of different mould from his own; he does not reason, he affirms, and affirmation persuades only where it wakes an echo. Even his affirmations are often indistinct, perhaps self-contradictory; the divine realities which he contemplates are too vast, too splendid, too many-sided to be confined within limits of human words; he looks at them, now in this aspect, now in that, and his reports, each true to the vision of the moment, cannot be identical with one another. No great religious movement, therefore, proceeds from mysticism; what enthusiasm it evokes is retired, restrained, self-centred. But it is a thread of gold running through the coarser ecclesiastical stuff of the ages, that in which all nobler and sweeter spirits become conscious of common accord.

I pass over some of the philosophical aspects of mysticism, as illustrated by the great names of Eckhart and Rysbroeck, to call attention to two of its most important practical manifestations—the "Friends of God," upon whom Tauler and the *Theologia Germanica* are to be affiliated, and the "Brethren of the Common Life," who produced Thomas à Kempis and the *Imitation of Christ*. The former were a secret association of men and women who, in the second half of the fourteenth century, had their chief centres of action upon the Upper Rhine. They were of very various rank and degrees of education. They did not form any visible sect, and do not appear to have felt the temptation to nonconformity. Their object was to deepen and purify the spiritual life of their members, a purpose for which the devotional forms of the Church were accepted by them as adequate. But as they did not desire to draw upon themselves the notice of the Inquisition, they designedly threw an air of secrecy over their proceedings, and in the Church history of the time come and go in a mysterious fashion, which up to a quite recent period concealed their true character. Their leader is usually supposed to have been Nicholas of Basel, the layman who, in a well-known narrative,[1] now believed to have been written by himself, appears as coming to Tauler, rebuking him for his Pharisaic self-sufficiency, and condemning him to a two years' abstinence from preaching. There are others of the Friends of God whose names deserve

[1] Vide *Life and Sermons of Dr. John Tauler*, ed. Susanna Winkworth, p. 1 *et seq.*

mention, but in comparison with Tauler, a great preacher in Strassburg, whose sermons still find readers, they are but dim figures moving across a confused and ill-lighted stage. To this school of thought may be unhesitatingly referred the *Theologia Germanica*. When Luther first discovered and printed it, he thought and spoke of it as Tauler's,[1] although it declares itself in its preface to be the work of a God's Friend, a priest in the House of the Teutonic Knights at Frankfort. To this origin its contents answer with absolute accuracy. It is the exposition of a pure and profound religious faith, unalloyed by any local or temporary dogmatic element. It is a book for every century, for it bears the distinguishing mark of none.

The "Brethren of the Common Life" belong more to the practical order of things. Their founder, Gerhard Groot, a native of Deventer, was born in 1340, studied first in Aachen and Köln, then in Paris, and returned home to enter upon what promised to be a course of rapid promotion in the Church. How the wealthy and worldly ecclesiastic was transformed into an ascetic is a story not to be told here; it does not essentially differ from that of other similar conversions. The intellectual turning-point of Groot's life lay in his intercourse with Johann Rysbroeck, the well-known mystic, who was the Prior of a House of Augustinian Canons at Groenendal, near Brussels. Taking deacon's orders, Groot was for some years a successful preacher, till, silenced by authority, he contented himself with gathering round him a few young men, who rather threw their resources together and lived a common life than bound themselves by vows or strove to reduce existence to a fixed uniformity. They copied and bound books, and presently began to devote themselves to the education of the young. Groot died at a comparatively early age; and it was under his successor, Florentius Radewins, that the community assumed a more fixed form. But it was the loosest of monastic orders, if indeed monastic it can be called. There was no irrevocable self-dedication. There was no cloistered seclusion. The Brother-houses, as they were called,—there were also female communities of the same kind,—were bodies of friends who agreed to live together, to have but one purse, and to

[1] *Dr. M. Luther's Briefe*, ed. De Wette, vol. i. p. 46.

occupy themselves in the same tasks. Connected with these were one or two houses of Regular Canons, that for instance at Windesheim, of which I have already spoken, which furnished opportunity for gratifying the more strictly monastic aspirations of some of the Brethren. An air of simple piety, of sanctified good sense, seems to breathe through these communities during the comparatively short period in which they flourished; nor was the tradition of the founder lost or impaired by his successors. Of one of their characteristic occupations, the copying of books, the community was deprived by the invention of printing; the products of the presses of Mainz, of Ulm, of Nürnberg, slowly came to be preferred to their beautiful MSS., many of which still enrich the libraries of Holland. The latest research seems to show that the merits of the Brothers of the Common Life, in regard to education, have been misapprehended, perhaps exaggerated. No improvements in the art of teaching can be directly traced to them. But scholars were received into the Brother-houses for education: the celebrated schools at Deventer and at Zwolle owed much to teachers who belonged to the order, and they must have the credit of having brought to the work of education an earnestness which was ethical not less than religious. Some of the greatest teachers of Germany in the fifteenth century stood in more or less close connection with the schools of the Brethren: nor from the theological point of view can it be forgotten that two of their pupils were Thomas à Kempis and John Wessel.[1]

Educated opinion is more and more settling down to the conviction that the ancient tradition, which makes Thomas Haemerken the author of the *Imitation of Christ*, is well founded. Born at Kempen, a little town near Köln, in 1380, he became a pupil of the Brethren in the school at Deventer in his thirteenth year, and from that time, till he died at ninety-one, was content in their pious companionship. Under the advice of Florentius, he entered the monastery of St. Agnes, near Zwolle, one of the houses of Regular Canons in close connection with

[1] See an article by Hirsche, *Brüder des Gemeinsamen Lebens*, in Herzog's *Encyklopädie für Theol. und Kirche*, 2d ed. vol. ii. pp. 678 *sqq.*; also Ullmann, *Reformatoren vor der Reformation*, 2d ed. vol. ii. bk. iii.

the Brotherhood, and there passed his long and innocent life in the peaceful occupation of copying books, writing the biographies of the great men of his order, and composing treatises of mystic devotion. The chief of them is that famous book, which has been translated into every European language, which has passed through innumerable editions, and, next to the Bible, has perhaps counted more readers than any other, the *Imitation of Christ*. That it should have met with so much acceptance at the hands of other than Catholic readers, is a striking testimony to the depth and sincerity of its religious feeling; for the odour of incense is upon it, and its ideal of human perfectness is distinctly monastic. Indeed it is justly liable to the charge of being only a manual of sacred selfishness; the domestic and social virtues are entirely overlooked by it; it points the way to the salvation of the solitary soul. But within these limitations its devoutness is so direct, so pure, so profound; its vision of divine realities so unclouded, its insight into human nature so deep and clear, as quite to obscure and overbear for the pious soul the difficulties of the form into which it is thrown. Its religiousness is mystical only in the best sense of that often-abused word; the soul is indeed invited to look straight into the face of its Divine Lord, but there are no affected obscurities of thought, no needless indistinctness of phrase; all is simple, straightforward, practical. To those who can study it in the original, the epigrammatic force, the subtle melody, the apt terms of expression double the charm. It was one of the merits of Gerhard Zerbolt, a younger contemporary of Florentius, to have advocated the reading of the Bible and the use of hymns and prayers in the vernacular tongue, and so to have prepared the way for the severance of Germany from the Papacy. But in the *Imitation* we are still in communion with the whole Latin Church; the language of Augustine and of Jerome, moulded indeed by centuries of monastic use, is upon our lips; we have not passed from the universality of mediæval to the national separations of modern Christianity. It was only twelve years after Thomas à Kempis died that Luther was born.

John Wessel, also a pupil at Zwolle, illustrates a very different school of thought, which did its part in moulding religious

opinion in Germany in the fifteenth century. With John Pupper of Goch (1400-1475), John of Wesel (1410 ?-1481), Wessel is counted as one of the "Reformers before the Reformation," who to a considerable extent anticipated the peculiarities of Lutheran teaching. John of Goch was the founder and director of a priory of Canonesses near Mecheln; John of Wesel, a teacher at the University of Erfurt, about the middle of the century, afterwards a popular preacher at Mainz and at Worms, who was tried for heresy, recanted, and died in prison. Wessel ran a more distinguished course; born at Gröningen, he studied at many universities, Köln, Louvain, Paris, Heidelberg; acquired so large a reputation for learning as to be decorated with the pompous title of *Lux Mundi*; was the friend of Cardinal Bessarion, and Francesco della Rovere, afterwards Pope Sixtus IV; was connected with the classical revival in Germany as the teacher of Rudolf Agricola and Reuchlin, and died at his birthplace uncondemned in 1489. All these men, though not willing to be accounted heretics, stand on the verge of heresy. They assert the sole authority of Scripture in matters of faith. They attack indulgences from both the doctrinal and the practical side. Wessel formulates a doctrine of justification by faith, though always faith that worketh by love. At the same time it is a mistake to speak of any of them as if they actually stood in the line of Luther's intellectual ancestry. It cannot be proved that he learned anything from them. John of Goch was a recluse, whose writings were first published in the sixteenth century with the express purpose of showing how Lutheran men had been before Luther. Of the two books by John of Wesel which still survive, one was first published in the sixteenth, the other not till the eighteenth century. To the third edition of John Wessel's *Farrago rerum theologicarum*, published in 1522, Luther prefixed a preface, in which he declares the almost verbal identity of his own doctrine with that of Wessel. But while so saying, he denies the existence of any actual link between himself and his predecessors. "Sic pugnavi ut me solum esse putans" ("I fought as thinking myself alone").[1] The coincidences between Luther's thought

[1] Seckendorf, *Commentarius historicus et apologeticus de Lutheranismo*, 2d. ed. bk. i. sec. 54, § cxxxiii. p. 226.

and that of the men of whom I have been speaking were many and striking; but their teaching is nevertheless best regarded as only one of the numerous elements which were mingling and seething together in that Germany of the fifteenth out of which the Germany of the sixteenth century was evolved.[1]

Luther's relation to Hus was the same as to Wessel, one of unconscious agreement. At the disputation with Eck at Leipzig in 1519, on being pressed to say whether he acknowledged the authority of the Council of Constanz and the justice of Hus's sentence, he was bold enough to declare his opinion that not all the doctrines condemned by the Council were heretical. But it was not till 1520, when he had read some of Hus's books, and received congratulatory messages from Bohemia, that he found out that he had all the while been a Hussite without knowing it.[2] I find it difficult, however, to determine how much of Hus's thought had been working in the German mind during the century that had elapsed since his condemnation. It was necessarily below the surface, for Hus was a convicted heretic, and to sympathise with him was to share his offence. Bohemia, though politically a part of the Empire, was separated from Germany by differences of race and speech; nor were the victories of Ziska or the ravages of Procopius likely to procure friends for their faith. Still, as Luther himself said in 1520, there had always been a murmur of John Hus in many parts of the land,[3] and that, too, continually on the increase. About 1430 a Saxon priest, John Drändorf, was burned near Worms for Hussite heresy. In Bavaria, in Swabia, in Franconia, even in Prussia, there were distinct traces of the same tendency. The city council of Bamberg at one time thought it necessary to exact from all the citizens an oath against Hussite doctrine. About 1446 we hear of one Frederick Müller, who, near Rothenburg on the Tauber, always a centre of political and religious enthusiasm, taught the Hussite doctrines, and gathered many adherents, of whom 130 were after-

[1] For a full account of these men and their theology, see Ullmann, *Reformatoren vor der Reformation.*

[2] *Briefe*, ed. De Wette. To Spalatin, Feb. 1520: "Ego imprudens hucusque omnia Johannis Hussen docui et tenui; docuit eadem imprudentia et Johannes Staupitz; breviter sumus omnes Hussitæ ignorantes; denique Paulus et Augustinus ad verbum sunt Hussitæ. Vide monstra, quæso, in quae venimus sine duce et doctore Bohemico."

[3] Erl. ed. vol. xxiv. p. 28: "Von den neuen Eckischen Bullen und Lügen."

wards compelled to abjure their errors at Würzburg. It seems possible to trace a direct connection between certain disciples of Hus, who had been expelled from Saxony by the Bishop of Meissen, and Zwickau, whence proceeded the first fanatical opposition to the Reformation of Wittenberg. Probably Hussite sympathies, wherever they manifested themselves, took the social revolutionary rather than the theological form; a theory which would make Hus the precursor quite as much of the Peasants' War as of the Reformation.[1]

There is always a little difficulty in separating zeal for reform from heretical tendency; the preacher who, in the heat of moral conviction, denounces practical abuses is rarely able to restrain himself from attacking the corruptions of theory from which they spring. But throughout this period there were theologians, of more or less orthodox reputation, who felt the vices and weaknesses of their age, and were zealous in trying to remedy them. Such was Felix Hemmerlin (†1464), who in the first half of the century held high preferment in Solothurn and Zürich, an ecclesiastic learned, liberal, full of the energy of moral reform. He had taken part in both Councils of Constanz and of Basel, on the reforming side, and was equally active with tongue and with pen. But his name will hardly be found inscribed in good Catholic annals; for that he was too direct and outspoken in his attack upon the Papal system of oppression and plunder; he ended his days in the imprisonment of the cloister, to which he had been judicially condemned. A name less suspected is that of Heynlin von Stein (†1496), who lived and worked at Basel, where he divided his attention between the Latin Fathers on the one hand, and Cicero and Aristotle on the other. He seems to have stood half-way between the old and the new tendencies of thought; was at once a humanist and a scholastic, and made his influence felt in the pulpit no less than in the professor's chair.[2]

The man, however, who above all others deserves the name of a Catholic reformer, is Geiler von Kaisersberg (1445-1510), whose eloquence for thirty-two years rang through all the

[1] Janssen, vol. ii. bk. iii. § 1; Ranke, vol. i. pp. 218, 219; vol. ii. p. 16; Hagen, *Deutschland's literarische und religiöse Verhältnisse im Reformationszeitalter*, vol. i. p. 169.

[2] Ranke, vol. i. pp. 192-195; Hagen, vol. i. p. 100 *et seq.*; Maurenbrecher, *Gesch. der Kath. Reformat.* vol. ii. p. 169.

Rhineland, from the cathedral pulpit of Strassburg. Born at Schaffhausen, he received his education at the universities of Freiburg and of Basel. His learning was that of the time; he was well acquainted with Latin, and especially with patristic literature, but he knew no Greek and no Hebrew. It was soon seen that the bent of his genius lay in the direction of preaching: there was a contest between Würzburg and Strassburg for his services, which at last Strassburg obtained. There the office of preacher in the cathedral was created and endowed for him; and for the long period above mentioned, he preached every Sunday and feast day, and daily through Lent. Many of his sermons still survive, though for the most part in the form in which they were written down by his hearers. Their ultimate object was moral, to rebuke vice and to recommend virtue; and to this end he used the plainest speech. Neither clergy nor laity escaped the edge of his invective. On one occasion, indeed, the fearless preacher came into direct collision with the authorities of the city, whom he had charged with conniving at many abuses and corruptions. But it speaks well for both parties that Geiler, called to account, formulated his accusations in more temperate, but still distinct terms; and that the magistrates recognised that ethical instruction and rebuke belonged to the preacher's office. The form of Geiler's sermons was often peculiar. He made a plentiful use of allegory, both in his interpretation of Scripture and in the general treatment of his subject. He was accustomed to preach long series of sermons on books written by other men; and, in this way, illustrated the *Ship of Fools*, by his friend Sebastian Brant. But while many of the works thus turned into homilies were grave theological treatises, he would preach, if the fancy took him, or if he thought he saw a prospect of useful impression, on popular ballads, Æsop's fables, current proverbs. The division of his sermons was often amusingly artificial; he was fond of acrostics, as, for instance, he divided a sermon on St. Aurilea into seven heads, the subjects of which were suggested by the seven letters of the word. Naturally he made a free use of anecdote; painted typical characters in the plainest colours; introduced dialogues into the substance of his sermons. There was no mistaking his meaning;

he lashed the vices and follies of his time with the whip of a sharp invective, which went straight to its mark. He would allegorise anything. A lion at a fair suggested to him the Devil seeking what he might devour; while from Proverbs xxx. 26 he preached a sermon upon the hare as a type of the Christian, in which he pursued him through every stage of his career, till at last he is roasted and served before the king on a golden dish. But with all this he was an honest, outspoken man, zealous for righteousness, and doing his duty fearlessly in spite of indifference and opposition.

The way in which Geiler made himself a centre of reform in the Rhineland, by acquiring an ascendency over its prelates, is very remarkable. There was that in the real religiousness, the transparent honesty of the man which made him very attractive to some at least of the well-born and wealthy ecclesiastics, with whom his office at Strassburg brought him into contact. His first convert was a bishop of Strassburg itself, Albert of Bavaria, who invited him to preach before his provincial synod, and took his advice in the reformation of monasteries: the next, Count Frederic of Zollern, who afterwards became Bishop of Augsburg, whither he persuaded Geiler for a time to follow him. Christopher von Utenheim, afterwards Bishop of Basel, was another of the young men upon whom his charm worked; and at a later period William von Honstein, who succeeded Albert as Bishop of Strassburg; and Philip von Daun, who in 1508 became Elector-archbishop of Köln. It follows naturally from all this that Geiler laboured strictly within the lines of the Church. He does not seem to have felt a moment's temptation to be heterodox. His mind was all given to the practical objects of preaching; he has left behind him no theological treatise. He was a devoted partisan of Mary and her immaculate conception: he bowed to the authority of the Papal See, and had nothing but condemnation for heretics and schismatics. But he was at once anxious to raise the intellectual status of the clergy, which he felt to be disgracefully low, and eager in rebuking their moral laxity. His exertions, however, chiefly took a disciplinary direction, and did not contemplate radical changes of any kind. He thought that a

fresh spirit breathed into the old form would suffice, and that devoted bishops and pious priests would create the Church anew. Still it is characteristic both of the man and the times that he often despaired of success, and meditated retirement into a convent.[1]

It is necessary to mention in this connection the effect upon German religion of the invention of the art of printing. It spread with wonderful rapidity from Mainz all over Germany: in the latter half of the fifteenth century it may even be said that the literature of Europe was in the hands of German printers, who set up their presses in every considerable city. The new art, which was perfected almost as soon as born, fell in with the rising tide of humane learning, and was carried by it to a condition of marvellous prosperity. Mainz soon had five printers, Ulm six, Basel sixteen, Augsburg twenty, Köln twenty-one, Nürnberg twenty-five. Of the printers in Nürnberg in 1470, Antony Koburger was the most famous. He had twenty-four presses, worked by above a hundred journeymen. At Basel the name of Johann Froben is inseparably connected with that of Erasmus, whose edition of the Greek New Testament he printed in 1516. The Frankfort fair became the centre of an active book trade. Nor was the Church slow to avail herself of the assistance of the new art. The first book printed at Mainz was the Latin Bible, and before the century was out ninety-seven editions of the Vulgate had been printed, of which twenty-six were from German presses, while of thirty-two more, which give no indication of place, some, if not all, must certainly be assigned to Germany.[2] But besides these there were issued from the press no fewer than fourteen German Bibles, without reckoning others in Low German dialects.[3] Of annotated Bibles, as well as of editions of portions of Scripture, this enumeration takes no account. Psalters, books of popular devotion, collections of sermons, manuals of confession, were multiplied in large editions. The great glory of the Koburger press at

[1] For Geiler, see Dacheux, *Un réformateur Catholique à la fin du XV^e siècle, Jean Geiler de Kaysersberg.* Also, Ch. Schmidt, *Histoire Littéraire de l'Alsace, à la fin du XV^e et au commencement du XVI^e siècle*, vol. i. pp. 335-461.

[2] Herzog, 1st ed. vol. xvii. p. 438 (2d ed. vol. viii. p. 450).

[3] W. Grimm, *Geschichte der Lutherischen Bibelübersetzung*, p. 2.

Nürnberg was the splendid German Bible of 1483, which Michael Wohlgemuth adorned with more than one hundred woodcuts. In many places printing presses were set up in ecclesiastical precincts: witness that of Schweynheim and Pannartz in the Benedictine Monastery at Sabiaco, and Caxton's in the Almonry at Westminster. The Brethren of the Common Life forsook their copying of MSS. to establish a press at Rostock, one of the earliest in North Germany. But it is curious to note that the ecclesiastical censorship of books was a twin birth with the art of printing. Archbishop Berthold of Mainz, of whose patriotic efforts to breathe a new life into the Imperial constitution of Germany I have already spoken, issued in 1486 an order that every book before being printed should be submitted to censors appointed by himself, who should see that it contained nothing contrary to the faith, a regulation which the Papal See in 1501 made universally binding.[1] Restrictions of this kind would hardly conciliate those whose livelihood depended on the production and circulation of books, nor need we wonder that Cochlaeus in 1522 should complain that the Church did not receive fair play from the new art, and that the printers and booksellers were all on the side of Luther.[2]

The end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century was in Germany a period of great popular excitability in regard to religion. It seemed as if there were a fire of enthusiasm always waiting to be kindled; as if any chance spark always spread into a broad blaze. Such, for instance, was the sudden devotion in 1475 to what was called the Holy Blood of Wilsnack. This was a little Brandenburg village on the Lower Elbe, where a miracle of a bleeding wafer—a not uncommon mediæval type of marvel—was said to have taken place. All Central Germany seemed to have been simultaneously stricken by the desire to make a pilgrimage to this obscure spot. The contagion was especially active among children and young people. They passed through the land, bearing crosses and banners, singing their Kyrie Eleison, and

[1] Maurenbrecher, *Kath. Ref.* vol. i. p. 80.

[2] *Historia Jo. Cochlaei de actis et scriptis Martini Lutheri*, etc. Coloniae, 1568, p. 82. Conf. generally Janssen, vol. i. pp. 12-21.

carrying away with them in their enthusiasm all whom they met. Tales were told of peasants who left their waggons and horses in the road to join them; of women who ran away from house and children. They hardly knew whither they were going or why; some had never heard of the Holy Blood; others thought they saw a red cross in the air, which showed them their way. The clergy, a somewhat unusual case, did not make use of the movement for their own purposes, but they were quite powerless to restrain it; the people hardly knew whether it were God's work or the devil's; but all agreed that there was something supernatural about it.[1]

A still more curious excitement was that which in the following year, 1476, drew crowds of pilgrims to Niklashausen, a little Franconian village near Rothenburg, on the Tauber. The hero of the tale was one Hans Böheim, a musician, who was accustomed to attend village merry-makings with bagpipe and drum. To him, according to his own story, appeared the Virgin Mary, clad in white, bidding him burn his drum, and preach to the people the things that should be. He was a simple enthusiast, fully possessed with a belief in his own mission; if he was supported by others from interested motives, as, for instance, the village priest, who soon reaped a rich harvest from the preaching of his parishioner, no suspicion of insincerity attaches to himself. His sermons were more than half political, touching with a vigorous hand the wrongs and sorrows of the time; tradition says that Hussite teachers had formed him; it is certain that his preaching contained some of the twelve demands which, half a century afterwards, were made the occasion of the Peasants' War. He spared neither Pope, nor Emperor, nor Princes; while he pitied the oppressions of the people, he held up before their eyes a new ideal of society. The luxury of the rich, the corruption of the priesthood, were among his constant themes; a time was coming at which the shaveling would be glad to hide his crown with the palm of his hand; at which priests and lords should work for a daily wage, and no man possess more than another. As in addition to all this, he preached that nowhere could the Virgin be so acceptably approached as at Niklashausen, where she

[1] Gothein, *Politische und religiöse Volksbewegungen vor der Reformation*, p. 8.

had appeared to her servant, pilgrims flocked to the little church, which soon grew rich out of their liberality. Every day arrived a fresh throng, to be addressed by the "Holy Youth," as they called the piper, to carry away if possible some fragment of his dress as a relic, and to cast into the bonfire which he kindled their gauds and vanities. The whole country was astir; everywhere pilgrims found hospitality among those who were moved by the same enthusiasm as themselves; round Niklashausen itself a town of booths and huts was growing up. To what lengths the fanaticism might have gone, whether the Church might not at last have accepted the piper as a saint and Niklashausen as a sacred shrine, cannot now be conjectured: the Bishop of Würzburg sent over a party of lanzknechts, who carried away Böheim a prisoner. His followers were greatly moved, and to the number of many thousands beleaguered Würzburg, demanding the release of their prophet. But there was no solid military strength in this undisciplined crowd; a single charge of cavalry dispersed them in wild confusion. The Bishop was merciful, and took no savage revenge on his rebellious subjects; two only of the ringleaders were beheaded, the piper himself committed to the flames. He died the death of a martyr, singing hymns to his patroness, the Virgin, till the smoke choked his voice. He was the Savonarola of the Franconian peasants.[1]

Natural causes combined to deepen and extend this religious excitability. The last ten years of the century included several of abnormal scarcity; and pestilence followed in the track of famine. For three years, of which 1502 was the worst, the plague raged, till in the cities on the Rhine and in Swabia half the inhabitants perished. This too was the period at which a new and dreadful scourge of humanity, syphilis, first made its appearance in Germany. We hear of it in 1494 in Augsburg, in 1497 in Nürnberg. In 1505 Nördlingen could hardly pay its contribution to the Swabian league, so great were its charges arising from the "mala Francosa." Sufferers from this horrible disease had their special place of pilgrimage, to which they resorted for cure or protection—a church of the Virgin at Grimmenthal, in the

[1] Gothein, p. 10 *et seq.*; Ullmann, *ubi supra*, vol. i. Beilage i. p. 349 *et seq.*

county of Henneberg.[1] It falls in with all this that the latter part of the fifteenth century should be a time when new saints came up, and new practices of piety were adopted. The long and still undecided struggle between the Franciscans, who defended the Immaculate Conception of Mary, and the Dominicans, who opposed its erection into an article of faith, had first done much to elevate the Virgin to a position of supremacy among saints, and next to draw the attention of the faithful to her parents. St. Anna and St. Joachim are favourite objects of devotion at this time. Chapels were dedicated to St. Anna, brotherhoods were founded in her honour. Both St. Anna and St. Joachim were miners' saints. Annaberg, founded in 1496, and Joachimsthal, about the same time, were both mining towns.[2] This too, or a little earlier, was the time at which the Ave Maria first acquired its prominent place in worship; at which the Rosary came into fashion; at which the Holy Coat of Trier became a popular relic. Luther, writing to the clergy assembled at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, enumerates these things, and asks, "Were not all these things new, ten, twenty, forty years ago?"[3]

From saints to witches is a not unnatural transition. The belief in the supernatural, which sees nothing incredible in the habitual interference with the order of nature on the part of beneficent beings, finds its counterpart in a similar belief in the interference of beings not beneficent. It was an old popular superstition that the devil made compacts with men, and still more with women; and the Inquisition had long treated witchcraft as a crime that had a clear and close connection with heresy. But this belief now suddenly gained strength and coherence. In 1484 Innocent VIII issued a bull, which at the same time took the theory of witchcraft under Papal protection, and handed over the offence to the Inquisition to be dealt with. This was followed in 1487 by the publication of the famous *Malleus Maleficarum*, the work of the Dominican Inquisitor, Jacob Sprenger: a book which reduced witchcraft and its detection to a science. It was issued with

[1] Gothein, p. 76.

[2] Kawerau, *Casper Güttel*, p. 16; Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der Christlichen Archäologie*, vol. vi. p. 361.

[3] Erl. ed. vol. xxiv. p. 376: *Vermahnung an die Geistlichen, versammlet auf dem Reichstag zu Augsburg*, 1530.

a letter of recommendation from Maximilian, then King of the Romans, and quickly passed through several editions. From that time Germany appeared to be seized with an epidemic of witchcraft; the infection spread through Catholic and Protestant countries alike, and before the beginning of the eighteenth century, when the rage abated, thousands of poor wretches had been burned, and, saddest of all, chiefly on their own confession. What more convincing proof of the virulence of an intellectual contagion than that it should affect persecutor and victim alike?[1]

In the year 1501 there was a fresh outbreak of epidemic superstition in the so-called cross miracles. It began in the Low Countries, in a village near Maestricht. On the head-dress of a young married woman was seen a golden cross, round which were smaller similar crosses, and a number of indefinite spots, in which a pious fancy discerned the similitude of lances and nails. The appearance continued when the head-dress was changed: presently other crosses were seen elsewhere; the clergy took the matter up, and before long the dioceses of Utrecht and Liège everywhere swarmed with these grotesque miracles. The Bishop of Liège drew up a report to the Emperor, which naturally found a wide circulation in pamphlet form. Other pamphlets written for the people, and adorned with illustrative woodcuts, widely extended the area of miracle. Soon the epidemic spread to other parts of Germany, and the frightful pestilence of 1502 helped to give it intensity. The crosses were seen everywhere; on the clothes of men and women; on the robes of officiating priests: sometimes the miracle took another form, and marks which recalled the sacred *stigmata* came out on hands and feet and side.[2] But wherever the cross miracles made their appearance, they were the signal for religious processions and pilgrimages. Most of these were naturally local; but it is a curious coincidence that just at this time a passion for pilgrimages seized

[1] Roskoff, *Geschichte des Teufels*, vol. ii. p. 213 *et seq.*

[2] Albert Dürer says: "Das grösste Wunderding das ich all' mein Tage gesehen habe, ist im Jahre 1503 geschehen, wo auf viele Leute Kreuze gefallen sind: ins besondere mehr auf die Kinder als auf andere Leute. Unter dem allen habe ich eines gesehen in der Gestalt, wie ich es weiter unter gemacht habe. Das war der Magd des Eyver, der in Pirkheimer's Hinterhaus wohnte, ins Leinenhemd gefallen." Thausing, *Dürer's Briefe, Tagebuch*, etc. p. 155.

upon the lower classes of the Italian people. Men took vows of pilgrimage for seven years; they appeared north of the Alps in troops, each with a wooden cross in his hand; in no place did they remain more than a day and a night; they fasted once in the week, and for the rest were content with the simple food provided by the hospitality of the peasants. Among the chief places of pilgrimage were always the three holy cities of Germany, Trier, Aachen, and Köln. Whenever in their wanderings they came to a church, they went in and prayed, prone upon the pavement, with their arms stretched out crosswise. All these various manifestations were accompanied by the usual signs of religious exaltation. Popular preachers found their opportunity; all great or startling events were supposed to have been foretold by these marvels; they were interpreted as pointing the way to a crusade against the Turks, which one party of pilgrims is said to have actually undertaken. Only in one place does the movement appear to have been used for purposes of social revolution; in South Germany a miller, who had painted his body with the miraculous crosses, and declared that he heard divine voices, gathered a number of people about him. But his pretensions, to which for a moment the Emperor Maximilian had listened, were burned up in the fire of martyrdom, which unbelieving authority was not slow to kindle.[1]

The year 1500 was a year of jubilee. But several causes concurred to lessen the usual throng of pilgrims to Rome; the plague raged in the sacred city, and Northern Italy was a seat of war. Under these circumstances the happy idea occurred to the Curia of carrying the jubilee to the northern nations. So far as Germany was concerned, the execution of the plan was confided to Cardinal Raymond Perrand, Bishop of Gurk, a Frenchman, of pleasing manners and proved diplomatic ability, who ten years before had visited it on a similar errand. To conciliate the support of the temporal princes, it was agreed that two-thirds of the proceeds of the sale of indulgences should be left in their hands, though only for the purpose of a crusade against the Turks; while the other third, together with the indirect income sure to accrue from the presence of

[1] Gothein, p. 88 *et seq.*

a Legate, should be paid to the Pope. The indulgence offered was of the amplest kind. It freed not only from the temporal punishment, but from the actual guilt of sin. It extended not only to the living, but to the dead: liberation from purgatory was on sale in all German cities. I cannot in this connection speak of the political interests involved in Cardinal Raymond's relation to Emperor and Diet; it is enough to say that his mission defines the official form in which indulgences were presented to the German people, by a direct representative of the Roman See, only a few years before the decisive collision between Tetzel and Luther. Centres of pilgrimage were prescribed, each of which for the time took the place and assumed the sanctity of Rome. In these, seven churches were set apart, borrowing the names of as many basilicas in the sacred city, a visit to which was necessary to the efficacy of the indulgence. There was a solemn entry of the Legate, to which the local authorities usually lent their best splendour, a sermon by some bishop or other chosen preacher, a legatine benediction, and then a great cross set up in the market-place, with beating of drums, and blowing of trumpets, and a brisk trade, without too close an inquiry into the character of buyers. What the religious and theological tone of Cardinal Raymond's mission was, we know with accuracy from the writings of Johann von Paltz, who was appointed to preach the indulgence in Thuringia, Meissen, and the Mark. He was an Augustinian monk of that convent at Erfurt which was afterwards Luther's, and already a popular religious author. In 1490 he had published his *Himmlische Fundgrube*, a little book of practical piety, and which in 1502 appeared in a Latin form, for the benefit of trained theologians, under the title *Coelifodina*. It was, however, in his *Supplementum Coelifodinae*, published two years afterwards, that he laid down his theory of indulgences, and undertook their defence. He was no vulgar plunderer of the people, under the mask of religion: his books are full of a sincere, if somewhat material piety, and he found a logical basis for his views in the Catholic doctrine of justification. But the theory of indulgences had never before been stated in so absolute a form, never had the power of the Pope to absolve from sin and to release from purgatory been so boldly

stated. The mission, in which Cardinal Raymond won golden opinions from all sorts of men, lasted till the summer of 1504: Nürnberg, Köln, Mainz, Erfurt, Leipzig, Lübeck, were in succession his headquarters, and in all he was more or less successful. But perhaps, after all, the most memorable thing that he did was to consecrate in 1502 the Castle Church at Wittenberg, to the door of which, fifteen years later, Luther affixed his Ninety-five Theses against indulgences.[1]

[1] Gothein, p. 105 *et seq.* For Paltz, see Kolde, *Die Deutsche Augustinercongregation und Joh. v. Staupitz*, p. 175 *et seq.* Cochlaeus, partly on the strength of Paltz's books, very justly identifies the Augustinian order with the theory and practice of indulgences, *ubi supra*, p. 6.

CHAPTER III

THE RENAISSANCE IN GERMANY

WE are not in this place concerned with the inquiry into the obscure and slowly-working causes which produced the movement of the human mind known as the Renaissance. One period imperceptibly grows into another: each age necessarily holds in itself the germ of its successor. The two facts as to the Renaissance which we have chiefly to bear in mind are, that the movement, beginning in Italy, spread thence to the other countries of Europe, and that it was largely influenced by the revived study of Latin, and still more of Greek literature. In the fourteenth century Latin was, side by side with Italian, a living language in Italy: it was the dialect of religion, of diplomacy, and to a large extent of literature: Petrarch relied for immortality more on his *Africa* than on his *Canzoni:* Dante wrote indifferently in either tongue. In the moulding hands of the Church it had assumed a new form, without ceasing to be itself. The Latin of the Vulgate, if not Ciceronian, is a flexible, a majestic, an expressive tongue: and though the cadences of mediæval hymns are widely different from those of Virgil, they hardly yield to them in sonorous sweetness. When, therefore, it began to be thought once more that there was nothing inconsistent with the profession of a Christian in reading Latin orators and poets, as well as Latin Fathers, Italy seemed only to be reclaiming a neglected heritage. It is true that her scholars had much to learn and unlearn before they could even approach the standard of Ciceronian purity of speech: not till successive

generations had applied themselves to the task did they realise how much the ages of faith had forgotten. But as they slowly toiled, they awoke to the fact that men had left behind them a very different world from that which the Church had formed and inspired, and the old classical spirit began to glow within them once more.

Latin literature, however, is largely imitative: one of its chief functions has been to transmit and diffuse the spirit of Greece. The Italian Renaissance, therefore, did not assume its proper character until the fall of Constantinople drove Greek teachers westward, and the charm of Hellas again began to work. Plato, and still more Aristotle, had dominated those philosophical studies in which the Middle Ages took so much delight; but men now went back from imperfect translations and jejune commentaries to the originals, finding that the masters of Greek thought were fit for better things than the mere provision of an intellectual framework for scholastic Christianity. Philosophical speculation again took an independent flight, and the idea of science slowly possessed itself of men's minds. As manuscripts of epic, and drama, and history were imported and transcribed; as the initial difficulties of a copious and flexible language were slowly mastered, a new world seemed to open, full of attraction and delight, yet utterly unlike anything that was realised in Christian Europe: a world in which men stood in happy communion with nature, whose enjoyments they freely tasted, whose secrets they fearlessly explored, and where existence was always free, various, poignant, full. It was as if there were a possibility of going back to the fresh youth of humanity, in which strength and beauty were the natural expressions of life, when renunciation was not yet a virtue, nor self-maceration the secret of peace. Above all, the intellectual contagion which the Greek spirit always carries with it, began to operate, and without quite knowing whither they tended, men went out in quest of a new goal of thought and life.

Nevertheless the Italian Renaissance cannot be called productive. It spent itself in acquiring a mastery of the new instruments of thought, and having acquired it, did very little with them. The process was a longer and more difficult one

than we, with all the materials of classical erudition amassed and arranged, now find it easy to conceive: grammars had to be constructed, dictionaries to be compiled, texts to be settled, commentaries to be made, the life of the ancients to be studied as well as their languages, a knowledge of their history to be added to a knowledge of their thought. The labours of many generations were needed to complete the task, nor, if we include in it the functions of criticism, is it completed yet. The work of the Renaissance may perhaps be defined to be the reconciliation of the ancient with the mediæval spirit, and their fusion into modern thought and life; and the great Italian scholars of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were concerned with this only in its earliest stages. It is no disparagement of their labours to admit that they did not fully understand either their scope or their worth. While they were writing prose which should contain no phrase unused by Cicero, while they were polishing verses to imitate the cadences of Ovid, they were not so much accomplishing any immediate result of importance as paving the way for better work by a succeeding generation. These school exercises are hopelessly forgotten: if the scholars of the Renaissance have left behind them anything with life in it, it is the vernacular prose and verse of which they thought little. The century which is peculiarly their own is almost a blank in the history of Italian literature: we pass at a bound from Petrarch, Dante, Boccaccio to Pulci, Boiardo, Ariosto. If they were not even great scholars, it was because they could not be: the idea and the possibility of great scholarship have been slowly evolved since they became silent. But they laid the foundations of modern erudition, and strong foundations are always buried out of sight.

The revival of letters in Italy neither led to any activity of theological thought nor produced any religious reformation. Lorenzo Valla is the only humanist whose name can be mentioned in this connection. He exposed the fiction of the Donation of Constantine, he criticised the Latin of the Vulgate, he expressed doubts as to the authenticity of the Apostles' Creed, his Notes on the New Testament are the beginning of modern Biblical criticism. But it is characteristic of the class

and the time to which he belonged that he should escape from the clutches of the Inquisition only by a cynical profession of conformity with the Church, and owe to the purity of his Latinity the lucrative office of secretary to Pope Nicholas V. Open rebellion against the Church was a thing of much later date, and belongs to the time when the reverberation of the German Reformation had made itself heard in Italy: the earlier humanists conformed and disbelieved. The idea that the new learning could be used to clear the foundations of Christian theory, or to reform the abuses of the Church, seems never to have occurred to them: nor can I find that in Italy the Renaissance retarded for a moment the swift progress of ecclesiastical corruption. In one way indeed it accelerated it. The frank naturalness of the classic life, with which the humanists were making themselves acquainted, was infinitely attractive to men already prone to dislike and disbelieve in ascetic virtue: nor when Zion ran riot was stern self-restraint to be expected of Olympus. It would not be too much to say that many of the humanists were not only Pagan in practice, but veiled a Pagan creed by a very transparent pretence of orthodox belief. Such men as Gemistus Pletho and Marsilio Ficino were avowed Platonists; others did not take life seriously enough to care even to varnish their self-indulgence with a philosophical theory. The fact is, that in Italy the Church broke down more conspicuously than in any other country. Like the acolyte, she was too near the altar to have any reverence for it left. In Rome all ecclesiastical traffic centred; thither men came to weave their intrigues, and to compass their purposes of greed: there the wealth of every national church was spent in luxury and vice. For the time the fire of monastic piety had ceased to burn, except in a few hearts here and there: and there was no other to take its place. The impulse given by the Renaissance to art and archæology determined the direction of educated taste; what humanists and their patrons cared for was a new manuscript of a classic poet, a freshly-disinterred piece of ancient sculpture, a medal with an apt legend, a porcelain dish glowing with a novel adaptation of an old myth. But Christian antiquity lay in the dust of neglect. It was

left to Basel and to Alcala to print the New Testament in Greek. Only when the treasures of classical literature seemed to be exhausted did editions of the Fathers sparingly issue from the presses of Italy. And this incapacity for religious thought, almost for serious thought of any kind, continued to be the bane of Italian humanism. It went on polishing Ciceronian phrases, weaving imitative verses, long after the learning which it taught the graver northern nations had been applied by them to shake the foundations of mediæval Christianity; till at last it failed to perform even its own limited function with success, and leadership in erudition passed to France and to Holland.

Germany, in the fourteenth century, had already five universities: Prag, founded in 1348, Vienna in 1365, Heidelberg in 1385, Köln in 1388, and Erfurt in 1392.[1] To these were added, in 1409 Leipzig, and in 1419 Rostock. All belonged to the strictly mediæval order of things, and were dedicated to the old learning. Theology, in its combination with the scholastic philosophy, medicine, the civil and the canon law, were the subjects of study. The method was as dry as the matter of teaching was limited and jejune; the creative period of mediæval philosophy was passed, and no great teacher like Roscelin or Abelard attracted round his desk crowds of disciples to listen to the exposition of living speculation. The student plodded his way through a rigidly-prescribed course of lectures and disputations, which gave him a degree, and qualified him for the exercise of a profession: at independent research, studies that did not pay, men laughed. Between 1440 and 1450 Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, afterwards Pope Pius II, was at Vienna, where he filled the office of Imperial secretary. Himself a child of the Italian Renaissance, at once polished by its intellectual culture and tainted by its moral laxity, he found himself at the court of Frederic III among a half-barbarous generation, who looked down with scorn on his unpractical zeal for literature. Though not

[1] Negotiations with the schismatic Pope Clement VII for the foundation of the University of Erfurt were begun in 1378, and the Bull was published in 1379. But the university was not actually opened for teaching till 1392. Kampschulte, *Die Universität Erfurt in ihrem Verhältnisse zu dem Humanismus und der Reformation*, vol. i. p. 6.

what we should now call a poet, he had received his laurel crown at Frankfurt from the Emperor, and till he entered the Sacred College was wont to sign his letters "Æneas Sylvius Poeta." But the men who taught and studied at the University of Vienna would have nothing to do with polite literature; poetry, they said, neither clothed nor fed them; "only Justinian and Hippocrates filled the purse."[1] At Köln, which was throughout its history a conservative university, the same state of things existed half a century later, when in other parts of Germany the new light had long been shining. A letter of Conrad Celtes, a well-known humanist, gives a dreary account, both of what was studied and what was neglected. Formal dialectics were alone valued. "No one teaches the Latin grammar; no one studies the orators. Mathematics, astronomy, natural history, are unknown. Poetry is ridiculed: men draw back in horror from the books of Ovid and Cicero, as Jews from swine's flesh."[2] What was true of Vienna and of Köln could hardly be conspicuously untrue of all the older German universities in the first half of the fifteenth century.

It may be worth while to describe somewhat more minutely the course of study at one of these universities. Knowledge was originally regarded as comprised in the three sciences of theology, medicine, and law, and in the seven liberal arts, proficiency in which was a necessary preliminary to graduation in any science. Each of the sciences was in itself a faculty: the arts, taken collectively, made a fourth. The seven were, however, again divided into two parts—the lesser or *trivium*, grammar, rhetoric, and music; the greater or *quadrivium*, dialectics, arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy. At a somewhat later period, when the works of Aristotle began to exercise an influence upon education, a different arrangement prevailed: at the University of Erfurt, for instance, in the fifteenth century, the seven liberal arts were taken to be grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, mathematics, physics, metaphysics, and morals. Take these words in the large sense which modern thought puts upon them, and you have the

[1] Æn. Sylvii Piccol. *Opera Omnia*, Basel 1551, p. 619, conf. pp. 719, 937.

[2] Quoted by Hagen, vol. i. p. 374.

materials of almost a complete education. But in reality they each stood for a dull and monotonous study of wretched text-books, and generally for the cultivation of a power of disputation, conducted under the limitations of the most formal logic, as remote as it well could be from sound knowledge or original thought. Greek was an unknown tongue: only a very few of the Latin classics received a perfunctory attention: Boethius was preferred to Cicero, and the Moral Sentences ascribed to Cato to either.[1] Rules couched in barbarous Latin verse were committed to memory. Aristotle was known only in incorrect Latin translations, which many of the taught, and some of the teachers probably, supposed to be the originals. Matters were not mended when the student, having passed through the preliminary course of arts, advanced to the study of the sciences. Theology meant an acquaintance with the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, or, in other cases, with the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas: in medicine, Galen was an authority from which there was no appeal. On every side the student was fenced round by traditions and prejudices, through which it was impossible to break. In truth, he had no means of knowing that there was a wider and fairer world beyond. Till the classical revival came, every decade made the yoke of prescription heavier, and each generation of students, therefore, a feebler copy of the last.[2]

Intercourse, political and religious, between Germany and Italy was always more or less active; and whatever intellectual forces powerfully moved the latter were sure, sooner or later, to influence the former too. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the great Councils of Constanz and Basel brought the two nations together on German ground, not, we may be certain, without some effectual contact of the intellectual kind. Poggio Bracciolini, the Florentine humanist, attended the first, making it the opportunity of a search through the convent libraries of Germany and Switzerland for MSS. of the classics. One result of the second was to bring

[1] The real author of the work was a Christian theologian of the seventh or eighth century. There are German texts of those distichs which go back as far as the thirteenth century. Schmidt, *ubi supra*, vol. i. p. 318 *note*.

[2] Erhard, *Geschichte des Wiederaufblühens wissenschaftlicher Bildung in Deutschland*, vol. i. p. 107 *et seq.*

Æneas Sylvius to Vienna, where he naturally gathered round him a body of friends, likeminded with himself in devotion to literary culture. But it was in the latter half of this century that the new learning touched and awoke Germany. The transition was sudden from the state of things which I have indicated to one of eager pursuit of classical learning, of joyful and sustained intellectual activity, of ardent desire to share the treasure of erudition which Italy held out to Europe. It was about 1455 that Gutenberg issued from his press at Mainz the first book printed from movable types, since known as the Mazarin Bible. This date marks the turning-point: the invention of printing urged on the new day with startling rapidity. Reuchlin was born in the same year; Erasmus, the flower of German humanism, only twelve years later. Nor can there be more striking evidence of the awakening of the national mind than the fact that in the half century between 1456 and 1506 nine new universities were founded: Greifswald in 1456; a little later, Freiburg; Basel in 1460; Ingolstadt and Trier in 1472; Tübingen and Mainz in 1477; Wittenberg in 1502; and Frankfurt on the Oder in 1506. I do not mean that all or any of these were established in the express interest of the new learning: some of them were strongholds of reaction, while older bodies like Erfurt and Heidelberg welcomed the fresh light. But they could not help becoming centres of intellectual activity, into which the fresh light found its way, and from which it radiated.

The new period is often reckoned from the date of Rudolf Agricola's visit to Italy, which was about 1476. A story, which has been handed down from one author to another without sufficient critical examination, tells how Thomas à Kempis, who with the Brethren of the Common Life was engaged in teaching, advised six of his best pupils to repair to Italy, to embrace there opportunities of instruction which Germany could not offer.[1] These were Rudolf Lange, Count Moritz von Spiegelberg, Rudolf Agricola, Alexander Hegius, Antonius Liber, and Ludwig Dringenberg. But the newest research not only seems to show, by comparison of dates, that

[1] See article by Hirsche, above quoted, in Herzog, *Encyk. für Theol.* etc. (2d ed.) vol. ii. pp. 678 *sqq.*

the basis on which this story rests is uncertain, but casts doubts on the supposed obligations of German schools at this period to the Brotherhood founded by Gerhard Groot. That there were good schools at Deventer, at Münster, at other places in Westphalia, and on the Lower Rhine, which played an important part in the development of education is certain: as well as that in some of them the Brethren taught, while in others they took a lively and practical interest. What now seems to be at least doubtful is, that these can rightly be called the Brethren's schools, and that certain improvements in the art of education, which were there introduced, can be directly traced to their influence. Perhaps it was easier for the new learning to make its way into schools which were under the direction of a single teacher, than into universities necessarily more influenced by tradition, where the old teaching resisted innovation with the tenacity of a vested interest. Of the six men just mentioned, at least five took an active part in such schools. Rudolf Lange (1438-1519), a dignified churchman at Münster, not only established the Cathedral school of that city on a fresh footing, but made himself the centre of an educational propaganda in the towns round about. Count Moritz von Spiegelberg (1420-1493), who became Canon of Köln and Provost of Emmerich, invited Antonius Liber, who at different periods of his life taught at Kempen and Alkmar, to establish a school at Emmerich also. Alexander Hegius taught in the school at Deventer, to which belongs the honour of having trained the young Erasmus. But the most celebrated of this group of schoolmasters was Ludwig Dringenberg (†1490), who was the head of a school at Schlettstadt in Alsace, which, founded in 1450, soon numbered 900 pupils, and was the centre from which the new learning spread itself along the Upper Rhine. It was from these schools to the universities that the contagion of learning spread: the more dignified bodies, standing in closer relations with the Church, and full of mediæval traditions, were slow to move.

Lange and Spiegelberg, whether advised by Thomas à Kempis or not, resolved to cross the Alps. But before doing so, Lange spent some time at the University of Erfurt, where,

from the year 1460 onwards, were teaching Peter Luder and Jacobus Publicius Rufus, both professors of the new learning, and the last a Florentine by birth. A little later came to Erfurt a young nobleman of the Rhineland, Johannes von Dalberg (1445-1503), also attracted by the new teachers, who, breaking through old prescriptions, professed "poetry" and "oratory." Then followed the journey to Italy, where Lange, Spiegelberg, Dalberg, and Agricola all met. I have already spoken of the ecclesiastical preferment enjoyed by the two first: Dalberg became Prince Bishop of Worms, and, at the invitation of Philip, Elector Palatine, Chancellor of the University of Heidelberg. There he did what he could to introduce the new learning into that already famous institution, laying the foundations of its library, and engaging in its services the best scholarship of the day. It was at his persuasion that Agricola (1443-1485) came to the fair city on the Neckar, and, not so much teaching as diffusing literary culture round about him, spent there the last years of his too brief life. These elder German humanists stand in marked contrast to the Italian scholars at whose feet they sat. They were grave men, taking life and learning in earnest, good Catholics, who wished to reform the abuses of the Church, without impugning her authority or touching her doctrine, and sincerely anxious to use their erudition in the service of religion. They poured the new wine into the old bottles, for the most part not surviving to see the completed work of fermentation. Agricola died in 1485, when Luther was only just born; Lange, whose honourable life was prolonged till 1519, is said to have welcomed the first outbreak of revolt.

Closely connected with Dalberg and the scholars of the Rhineland was Jacob Wimpheling (1450-1528), who, with Geiler von Kaisersberg, already mentioned in another connection, and Sebastian Brant, may be taken to represent the older humanists of Alsace. Born at Schlettstadt, he naturally received his education in Dringenberg's school, then in its first activity, and afterwards visited in turn the universities of Freiburg, Erfurt, Heidelberg. He was a scholar and nothing more: no gleam of genius irradiates anything he has left behind, in prose or verse; his best claims to remembrance are

his genuine devotion to learning and a zeal for education, which he manifested in more ways than one. During the whole of a long life, he was the undisputed head of a society of humanists upon the Upper Rhine, some of whom probably equalled him in learning, while they surpassed him in liberality of spirit. He is an excellent type of the scholar who, feeling bitterly the shame and scandal of ecclesiastical abuses, is anxious for their reform; while, at the same time, unimpeachably and even zealously orthodox. The Immaculate Conception had no more passionate champion than Wimpheling, who, himself in orders, lived in that clerical circle of which Geiler is, in the eyes of posterity, the most conspicuous figure. It is characteristic of him that, humanist as he was, he had not disengaged himself from patristic and mediæval prejudices as to the reading of heathen books. He enunciated the strange paradox that while such poets as Ovid, Juvenal, Tibullus, Catullus, Propertius ought to be altogether excluded from schools, Virgil, Lucan, the Odes of Horace, and some plays of Plautus and Terence, might be taught to children, though unfit for young men, and especially for priests. He refused in 1503 to read Virgil with a pupil who came to him for that purpose, proposing to substitute Sallust. But, a few years later, in the heat of a controversy with Locher, a humanist of Würtemberg, he went much further, abjuring all Pagan poets, and recommending in their stead, Prudentius, Sedulius, Baptista Mantuanus. No wonder that when the quarrel between the monks and the poets burst into flame, one of the "obscure men" qualified Wimpheling as "medius Reuchlinista" ("half a Reuchlinist").[1]

There is a fine spirit of patriotism about some of these old German humanists, which we miss in the contemporary scholars of Italy. Side by side with the new interest in classical antiquity grew up in their minds a desire to investigate the history of their own country, and to revive the half-forgotten glories of Barbarossa, of Otho the Great, of Charlemagne. The politics that find expression in the literature of the period are Imperial; partly the personality of Maximilian

[1] Hutten's *Opera*, ed. Böcking. Supplement, vol. i. p. 285. For Wimpheling, see Schmidt, *Histoire Litt. de l'Alsace*, etc. vol. i. pp. 1-190.

was attractive to men of letters: partly there was a genuine longing for a strong government, which should allay internal dissension and make the nation feared and respected abroad. These first historical researches were very crude and uncritical, nor, in that stage of knowledge, could they be otherwise; but they testify to a certain breadth of spirit which distinguishes the German from the Italian revival. In this connection Wimpheling deserves to be again named; he published an *Epitome Rerum Germanicarum*, as well as a catalogue of the bishops of Strassburg; while in an earlier work, the *Germania*, he laboured to prove that, from the days of Augustus, Alsace had always been German, and always a part of the Empire. But another scholar of the Rhineland, Trithemius (1462-1516), better represents the historical studies of the time. He was abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Spanheim, near Kreutznach, which, under the influence of a sudden impulse such as made Luther a monk, he had entered when quite a youth. He spent the greater part of his life in literary labours. He is said to have collected a library of 2000 volumes—then an enormous number—in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. The catalogue of his works, not all of which have emerged from the obscurity of manuscript, is a long one. His books *De illustribus Scriptoribus Germaniae* and *De Scriptoribus Ecclesiasticis* are an early contribution to the history of literature. He partly wrote, partly edited chronicles, some of general interest, others relating to particular monasteries, which may be found in the great collections of documents relating to early German history. That in addition to all this he was the author of such books of piety as befitted a Benedictine abbot is not surprising; more characteristic is his devotion to certain occult studies, in which he was the precursor of a man perhaps better known than himself — Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim. A good, pious, learned man, with no tendency to revolt against the Church, and probably too much absorbed in his beloved books to discern the coming storm. The war between the Elector Palatine and Bavaria, which he himself chronicled, compelled him to leave Spanheim in 1504, and when he returned he found that he could not resume his interrupted rule. He took refuge in a monastery near Würzburg, where again he was

chosen abbot, and again found occupation in writing the history of the house. Here he died in 1516.[1]

Standing in a certain contrast to these grave churchmen were a class of wandering humanists, the Knights Errant of the Revival, who cared less for the Church than they did for erudition. These men passed restlessly from city to city, from university to university, always finding friends, and always leaving behind them a fresh interest in the new learning. But they formed few permanent ties, and in a certain indifference to moral restraints, a frank enjoyment of natural delights, stood much nearer the Italian humanists than the serious scholars of whom I have hitherto spoken. Of these, Conrad Celtes (1459-1508) may be taken as the type. He began his career characteristically enough, by running away from home; he studied at many universities; he made the journey to Italy, incumbent upon all rising German scholars. But during the whole of his comparatively short life he settled nowhere for long. His travels extended from Padua to Krakau, from Hungary, some say, to Iceland. Ingolstadt and Vienna were probably the places which had the best right to claim him as a resident; in the university of the latter city the Emperor Maximilian founded a college for the study of poetry and oratory, of which he was the head. His restlessness, however, was not wholly without a purpose; he had conceived a great work, *Germania Illustrata*, in which, in the spirit of patriotism characteristic of the German humanist, he intended to tell the story of his native land, and to describe its physical features. This never came to the birth; but apart from Celtes's Latin poems, which are more voluminous than valuable, his travels resulted in the discovery of certain literary monuments, which cannot be dissociated from his reputation. Among these is a poem in which an unknown author, who takes the name of Ligurinus, describes in ten books the deeds of Frederic I, and the better-known works of Hroswitha, the nun of Gandersheim, who, in the tenth century, wrote so-called comedies in the hope of supplanting the dangerously seductive plays of Terence. Another discovery made by Celtes was the curious incised tablet, called from Conrad Peutinger, to whom he gave it, the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, a map of the

[1] Erhard, vol. iii. pp. 379-394.

roads of the Roman Empire in the age of Theodosius the Great. The *Ligurinus* and the *Hroswitha* Celtes published in his lifetime; the *Tabula Peutingeriana* was first printed in a complete form in 1598. All these things give an impression of Celtes as more a man of letters than a mere scholar; he had a keen interest in the history and antiquities of his own country; to theology he stood quite neutral, except that we find him on one occasion, when suffering from a serious illness, having recourse, not to the physicians, but to a favourite Virgin. In his Latin poems he successfully imitated the obscenity of Catullus; but there the resemblance ends.[1]

But literature was successfully cultivated by other than professional scholars. There was a class of men, especially in the free cities of the Empire, wealthy, of what among citizens was accounted patrician race, who to the functions of administration and diplomacy added a discerning patronage of art and letters, and in some cases a careful cultivation of the latter. Such was Conrad Peutinger of Augsburg (1465-1547), who, born eighteen years before Luther, survived him by a year, and saw almost the whole of the humanistic and religious movement of his time. He had studied in Italy, where he had earned the friendship of Politian, and whence he returned to pass a long life in the service of his native city and to form a great collection of classical and German antiquities.[2] But the characteristic figure of this kind is Willibald Pirckheimer of Nürnberg (1470-1530). The two great free cities Augsburg and Nürnberg were at this time in the zenith of their prosperity. The former, the residence of the Fuggers, the Rothschilds of the sixteenth century, was the centre of German finance, while through the latter, the trade of the East, not yet diverted by Vasco de Gama's discovery, passed from Venice to Central Europe. And as countless works of art, on canvas, in metal, in wood, in stone, still remain to testify, the burghers of Nürnberg used their wealth nobly. To compare any other city, in relation to artistic achievement, with Florence, seems an abuse of words; yet if any deserves the distinction, it is the Nürnberg of Michael Wohlgemuth and Peter Vischer, of Adam Kraft and Albert Dürer. Here, then, Willibald Pirckheimer passed the greater part of

[1] Erhard, vol. ii. pp. 1-146.

[2] Erhard, vol. iii. p. 394 *et seq.*

his life in the service of the republic; representing her upon many embassies, commanding her troops in Maximilian's war against the Swiss confederates. He too had studied long in Italy, and was master of the erudition of his time. His literary activity, notwithstanding his political avocations, was both great and varied: he translated Greek classics and Greek Fathers into Latin; he wrote a history of the Swiss war, in which he had been himself engaged; he conformed to a literary fashion of the age in an ironical panegyric on his frequent companion, the gout. It followed from his position, his wealth, his literary cultivation, that he should be in the closest personal relations with the scholars of his time; he was a frequent correspondent of Reuchlin, Erasmus, Hutten; Conrad Celtes called the old patrician house at Nürnberg, where Pirckheimer and his father had dwelt, his "diversorium literarium." His portrait by his life-long friend Albert Dürer is well known to all students of the period; a stately burgher, of commanding presence, with vigorous intellect and strong passions visibly impressed on every feature. He stands half-way, as it were, between humanism and the Reformation. When the strife between Reuchlin and the theologians of Köln broke out, he was, in a silently acknowledged way, head of the Reuchlinist party, and crowned the controversy with an "Apologia pro Reuchlino." His name was one of those included in the bull which Leo X fulminated against Luther; an honour which he owed to Eck, against whom he had published a bitter satirical attack. But his sisters Charitas and Clara Pirckheimer were successive Abbesses of the St. Clara convent in Nürnberg; the first a very noble woman, of great literary accomplishment, and the best type of Catholic piety. And Pirckheimer never heartily threw in his lot with a religious movement which disturbed and aimed to uproot much that was justly endeared to him both on the domestic and the ethical side. When he died in 1530 he was hardly at one with either the new Church or the old.[1]

[1] For Pirckheimer *vide* Erhard, vol. iii. pp. 1, 61, *et seq.* But Hagen's *Deutschland's literarische und religiöse Verhältnisse im Reformationszeitalter*, a work of great value and suggestiveness, is written "mit besonderer Rücksicht auf Willibald Pirckheimer," and puts him in the forefront of its picture. I may also refer to the rare volume, *Viri illustris Bilibaldi Pirckheimeri etc. etc. opera, politica, historica, philologica et epistolica*, ed. Goldast. Francofurti, 1610.

Further north, Erfurt was the centre point of a remarkable body of humanists, who were destined to play a very important part in the coming struggle between the modern and the ancient learning. The Thuringian University had always from the time of its foundation manifested a certain liberality of spirit; it was there, about the middle of the fifteenth century, that the first avowed professors of "poetry," Luder and Publicius, had taught. At the end of it, they had not unworthy successors in Maternus, Pistoris, and Nicholas von Marschalk, men who, without altogether breaking with the past, had a genuine love of the classical languages and literature. To Marschalk, who removed to Wittenberg in 1502, is due the introduction of the study of Greek into Erfurt; his edition of *Priscian on Syntax*, there printed, was the first product of the German Greek press. Round Maternus gathered a group of young men, who, between 1500 and 1520, gave Erfurt a kind of primacy among German universities. Among them were Johann Jäger, better known as Crotus Rubianus, a man of a biting wit, of whom we shall hear more presently; George Eberbach, and his two sons, Heinrich and Peter, the latter of whom latinised his name into Petrejus; Euricius Cordus, a Latin poet, who poured out his soul in countless epigrams, and was an ardent adherent of Luther's;[1] Johann Lang, the last Prior of the Augustinian Convent in which Luther took refuge, and among the first of the Protestant preachers of Erfurt; Spalatin, the chaplain and historiographer of Frederic the Wise; and a man who was destined to be the foremost scholar of a younger generation, Joachim Camerarius, the bosom friend and correspondent of Melanchthon. Here too came Hermann von dem Busche, one of the wandering humanists, who, in the excitement caused by his lectures, is said to have swept away the old mediæval text-books; and here Ulrich von Hutten, also a restless spirit, knitted many congenial friendships. But the head of the society has yet to be named, as well as the poet, who, of his followers, achieved the greatest contemporary fame.

It was about 1506 that the Erfurt "poets" transferred their allegiance from Maternus to Mutian. Conrad Muth, usually

[1] *Vide* Euricius Cordus: *eine biographische Skizze aus der Reformationszeit von C. Krause.* Hanau, 1863.

known as Mutianus Rufus, is one of the most remarkable, and at the same time one of the most engaging figures of the age. Born at Homburg in 1471, he was a schoolfellow of Erasmus, under Alexander Hegius at Deventer; then studied in Erfurt, and finally turned his steps to Italy, where we hear of him as in intimate intercourse with Baptista Mantuanus and Pico della Mirandola. He came back to Germany in 1502, when he took service for a few months at the Court of the Landgrave of Hesse. But he soon exchanged his chances of worldly promotion for a scantily-endowed canonry at Gotha, in the enjoyment of which he passed the rest of his life. Once at least he refused substantial preferment; when, on the death of Henning Göde in 1521, the Elector Frederic offered him the vacant Provostship of the Schlosskirche at Wittenberg, he quietly passed it on to Justus Jonas. He was content with his books and his friends, to whom an income more than sufficient for his personal wants enabled him to offer a modest hospitality. Over the entrance of his house at Gotha stood inscribed in golden letters, "Beata tranquillitas;" while, a little farther on, the words "Bonis cuncta pateant" seemed to invite the guest to ask himself whether he was worthy of access to the shrine. Hither, all through the years in which humanism flourished at Erfurt, flocked troops of young men, to sit at the feet of one whom they considered to be master of all learning, sacred and profane. They were all the more welcome that their host had no pleasure in the company of his clerical colleagues, who did not understand him, and whom he understood only to despise.

There was everything about Mutian to attract the young. Of undoubted learning, and with a mind always busy with the absorbing questions of the day, he yet wrote nothing. He collected books, he read, he talked. His only remains are letters to his familiar friends, of which, strange to say, some are still in manuscript, while all need careful editing and loving commentary. His method was essentially esoteric: he had secrets to impart to those whom he trusted, and at the same time convictions which he concealed from the vulgar. His opinions on conformity were such as might be expected from his turn of mind; he had no sympathy with protest or rebellion; the wise man, he thought, discerned the truths

hidden beneath familiar phrases, and discerning, held his peace. Though he retained his Church preferment, and performed with more or less regularity the duties of his office, he was at heart neither Catholic nor Protestant, but only a scholar, who loved and sought for the truth. He had grasped the idea that Christianity is older than the nativity of Christ, and that the true Son of God is that Divine Wisdom of which the Jews had no monopoly.[1] "Who," he said, "is our Saviour? Righteousness, peace, and joy. That is the Christ who has come down from heaven."[2] Again, "The clear commandment of God, which enlightens the eyes of the mind, has two heads, that thou love God, and man as thyself. This law, pleasant to heaven and to men, makes us partakers of heavenly things. This is the natural law, not graven on tables of stone like that of Moses, not cut in brass like the Roman, not written on parchment or paper, but by the highest teacher poured into our hearts. Who with due piety partakes of this notable and wholesome Eucharist, accomplishes a Divine action. . . . For the true body of Christ is peace and concord, and there can be no nobler sacrifice than mutual love."[3] He had his interpretations of Scripture too, which if not critical, were at least bold, and evinced that theological courage which the young admire and love. Naturally his followers, when they made the pilgrimage to Gotha, and received the welcome of his gracious presence, felt as if they were admitted to an inner shrine of wisdom, from which the common herd was jealously shut out. They were not men who cared much for theology, and he was to them saint as well as sage, a leader as well as a teacher. He gave them the impression of being too wise, too lofty, too detached to do the work which naturally fell upon themselves. He was as little capable of Erasmus's incessant literary activity as of Luther's fiery energy and persistency of will. Yet little

[1] Si Christus est via veritas et vita, quid tot seculorum homines ante nativitatem illius egerunt? Erraveruntne, crebris et densis ignorantiae tenebris obsepti, an salutis et veri participes fuerunt? Ego praejudicio quodam te adjuvabo. Non incepit Christi religio cum illius incarnatione, sed fuit ante omnia secula, ut prima Christi nativitas. Quid enim aliud est verus Christus, verus Dei filius, quam, ut Paulus inquit, sapientia Dei, quae non solum affuit Judaeis in angusta Syriae regione, sed Graecis et Italis et Germanis, quanquam vario ritu religionis observarentur. Tentzel, *Supplementum Hist. Gothan. primum*, pp. 37, 8.

[2] Tentzel, p. 20.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 57.

as he is now known, his is the only name which some at least of his contemporaries would have put beside theirs.

After Mutian, who was the undisputed head of the school, its most distinguished member was Eoban Hess, or, as he delighted to call himself, on the principle that every poet ought to have three names, Helius Eobanus Hessus. His real name was Eoban Koch, Eoban being a Thuringian saint, a follower of St. Boniface. But he called himself Helius, because he was born on Sunday, and Hessus, as being a native of Hesse. While his companions, whatever the form of their literary efforts, all rejoiced in the name "poet," he was one in very sober earnest: the author of many volumes of Latin verse, in many metres, and on many subjects. He thought himself, and his friends thought him, the greatest poet of the age. In one of his earliest poems he declared that by his verse he had conferred the same immortality upon Erfurt as the Iliad upon Troy, and the Thebais on Thebes. He executed a religious imitation of Ovid's Heroides, and translated not only the Iliad and Theocritus, but the Psalms and Ecclesiastes into Latin verse. Odes, epistles, pastorals, elegies, epigrams, flowed incessantly from a pen which was always forcible, often eloquent, and sometimes incorrect. There is almost an element of pathos in Eoban's calm reliance—no matter what temporary troubles beset him—on an immortality of fame: his contemporaries called him king, and he assumed the title in good faith: he did not know that he was working in a material that ensured his speedy oblivion. Always in difficulties, always ready to forget them in copious potations, always making large demands upon the admiration and benevolence of his friends; he lectured at Erfurt, then became rector of the new gymnasium at Nürnberg, returned to Erfurt again, and finally went home to his native Hesse, to die at Marburg in 1540. He was one of the humanists who cordially welcomed Luther, and the verses in which he celebrated the hero of the Reformation are all that now possess a living interest. But the doctrine of justification by faith apparently did not help him to self-control: his double allegiance, to wine and song, remained unshaken to the last. Mutian, on the contrary, not only never left the Catholic Church, but returned

more and more, as he grew older, into the ways of conventual piety. There is no reason to suppose that he sympathised with Luther's dogmatic system, and while his instincts were all in the direction of outward conformity, old age, poverty, neglect, the troubles of the times, would lead him to seek for religious consolation at the accustomed sources. His last words, however, simple and touching as they are, are hardly the confessions of a repentant freethinker. Calling for a pen the day before he died, he wrote, "The peasant knows many things of which the philosopher is ignorant. But Christ, who is our life, has died for us, and this I most firmly believe." He died at Gotha in 1526.[1]

This enumeration of a few comparatively celebrated names will, however, give a very inadequate idea of the literary activity of Germany at the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. The list might be almost indefinitely extended to show that every considerable city had one or more resident scholars, eager in the cultivation and diffusion of the new learning. These men collected the books which the Italian and German press plentifully poured forth, and made them the subjects of comment in a lively literary correspondence, which filled the same place in the life of scholars as reviews and magazines do now. In many districts men of letters were united in social bonds more or less close. Conrad Celtes formed a Rhenish and subsequently a Danubian society, each of which had for its object the cultivation of literature and art. This association quickened individual energy; men who exchanged the results of their studies felt that they were not alone, but working in the line of a great movement, while, if controversy arose, and sometimes deepened into quarrel, the resulting clash of words was at least better than stagnation. At the same time, this, like the corresponding period in Italy, was not fertile in works of literary excellence. With few exceptions, the productions of the

[1] For Mutian and Hess, *vide* Kampschulte, *Universität Erfurt*, bk. i. chaps. ii. iii. pp. 49-119. Conf. for Mutian, Tentzel, *Supplementum Historiae Gothanae primum C. Mutiani Rufi Epistolas complectens* (Jenae, 1701); Strauss, *Ulrich von Hutten* (2d ed.), pp. 30-37, 546-549; Hagen, vol. i. p. 323 *et seq.* For Hess, Dr. Carl Krause's excellent biography has been consulted, *Helius Eobanus Hessus, sein Leben und seine Werke.*

humanists in prose and verse have the air of school exercises, more or less perfectly performed, of which the manner is more important than the matter. This is especially the case with the poetry: even if modern Latin verse had otherwise any chance of remembrance, none that was written in Germany at this time, except perhaps that of Eoban Hess, could by possibility claim it. Among the elder scholars there was very little knowledge of Greek: it is often enumerated among the acquirements of men whose acquaintance with it did not extend much beyond the alphabet. Even the Latin classics were read in a quite uncritical way, with little discrimination of varying age and worth, while the imitation of them, which was often the scholar's highest aim, was only superficial. In what claimed to be original compositions, nothing can be more wearisome than the perpetual repetition of the tritest mythological allusions, almost always inapposite, and often introduced in connections where they are at once irreverent and ludicrous. In fact, Germany was only just beginning to spell out the first words of its classical lesson, and that without an idea of the magnitude and complexity of the task that lay before it. But the great thing was, that everywhere in the intellectual world there were light, air, movement; and that the stagnation into which mediæval science had settled was effectually disturbed.

At this point something may be said of a kind of literature which formed a transition between the humanists and the common people. For a time the classical revival in Germany was unfavourable to the continuous development of a vernacular literature, which had already shown considerable promise; to write in the people's language was for the most part left to such as had not appropriated the treasures, or did not feel the responsibilities of scholarship. But there was a popular satirical literature which formed part of the assault upon mediævalism, and in its way was sufficiently effective, making the clergy, from the Pope downwards, the object of special attack, and remorselessly holding up their moral weaknesses to ridicule and contempt. And akin to this was the literary movement which I am about to mention. Its earliest manifestation was in Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff*, or *Ship of Fools*,

a poetic satire, written in the dialect of Strassburg, which, first published in 1494, went through many editions, and has been translated into the chief languages of Europe. Brant (1457-1521) was a grave and religious humanist, the friend of Wimpheling and Geiler, who, at first a professor of law at Basel, came to Strassburg in 1500, and there spent the remaining years of his life as city secretary. He was a sound Catholic, if not a very good poet; while he deplores the abuses of the Church, he has not an idea of reforming them, except in an orthodox way. The *Ship of Fools* is perhaps more strictly allegorical than satirical: Brant's leading idea is that the sinner is always a fool; he lashes with steady invective the innumerable ways in which his contemporaries despise the divine law; but there is no lightness in his satiric touch, and his object is much more to instruct and reform than to amuse. The book, nevertheless, was immensely popular, and in 1497 was translated into Latin by a Swabian scholar, Jacob Locher, whose literary name was Philomusus. More deeply imbued with the spirit of popular satire were the *Facetiae* and the *Triumphus Veneris* of Heinrich Bebel (1470-1518?), one of the earliest teachers at the University of Tübingen: the first, a collection of anecdotes, of which it is difficult to say whether the obscenity or the irreverence is more remarkable; the second a poem, in six books, in which the whole world, clerical as well as lay, is represented as prostrate at the feet of the Cyprian goddess. Brant's poem may possibly have given a hint for Erasmus's *Encomium Moriae*, the first dated edition of which appeared at Strassburg in 1511, but which may have been written a year or two earlier. But his more legitimate successor was Thomas Murner (1475-1537), also an Alsatian, a Franciscan monk, who afterwards took up the cudgels with great goodwill against Luther. His *Narrenbeschwörung*, or *Conspiracy of Fools*, and his *Schelmenzunft*, or *Guild of Rascals*, which appeared at Frankfurt about 1512, are written in the same metre and dialect as the *Ship of Fools*, and, with much more satiric power than Brant possessed, give a similar picture of society and reprove the same vices.[1]

[1] For Brant *vide* Schmidt, vol. i. pp. 189-333; also *Das Narrenschiff von Dr. Sebastian Brant*, ed. A. W. Strobel, 1839. For Murner, Schmidt, vol. ii. pp. 209-315; Bebel, Hagen, vol. i. p. 381 *et seq.*

Upon the background, then, afforded by these facts, I have now to try to delineate the figures of three great men: John Reuchlin (1455-1522), Desiderius Erasmus (1467?-1536), and Ulrich von Hutten (1488-1523). It is in them and in their fate that the characteristics of German intellectual and religious life, in the period immediately before the Reformation, are most clearly seen.

John Reuchlin, the greatest of the elder generation of German humanists, whose name, by a curious perversity of fate, became the watchword of a party with whose aims he only half sympathised, was born at Pforzheim, in Baden, in 1455. Of his parents little is known; but from the fact that he was sent to the Latin school of his native place, and thence, when only fifteen years old, to the University of Freiburg, it may be concluded that they occupied a more honourable station than his enemies were afterwards anxious to make out. At Freiburg he did not remain long. Returning home, his pleasant voice attracted the attention of the Margrave of Baden, who chose him to go to Paris as the companion of his son, who was destined to the service of the Church. Here, in what had once been the chosen home of scholastic philosophy, he plunged into the studies of the time, making the acquaintance of two celebrated men of whom I have already spoken—Heynlin von Stein, who, though a German by birth, had been in 1469 rector of the university; and Rudolf Agricola, the typical northern scholar of his day. But soon, for some unknown reason, Reuchlin removed to Basel, where he in due course took the degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts. Already, however, the eager thirst for knowledge which was his distinguishing characteristic throughout life had manifested itself. In Basel was a Greek, Andronicus Contoblacas, who, though he gave no public lectures, was willing to teach his native language to any who wished to learn it. Reuchlin was his pupil—the first German who learned Greek from a Greek on German soil. Soon we find him at Paris again, continuing his Greek studies, under George Hermonymus, a native of Sparta. But he had chosen the law as his profession; and in order to prepare himself thoroughly for it, betook himself first to the University of Orleans, and next to that of Poitiers. Here, in 1481, he

received his doctor's diploma, which was the witness that his education was complete, and returned to Germany, hoping to find work in the new University of Tübingen. The result was other, perhaps better, than he expected; he was taken into the service of Eberhard with the Beard, the Count of Würtemberg, who was also its first Duke, a wise and resolute prince, who, if not himself learned, loved and cherished learning. Before long Reuchlin found himself on the way to Italy, in the suite of his patron. Florence was visited, where the young scholar enjoyed the conversation of the men of letters whom the Medici had attracted to their court; then Rome, where Sixtus IV was Pope. Here it was that he was brought into contact with John Argyropulos, a boastful and ill-tempered Greek, who had already taught his native language in Italy for half a century. The story goes that Argyropulos somewhat contemptuously gave Reuchlin, on his first introduction to him, a passage of Thucydides to read and translate, and was so struck by his success in performing the task as to exclaim, half in admiration, half in sorrow, that in his person Greece had now fled beyond the Alps. This was, however, only one of three journeys which Reuchlin made to Rome. But whatever the business that took him there, his eagerness for learning was the same. He was ready to sit at the feet of any who could unfold the secrets of classical or Hebrew antiquity. Of Hermolaus Barbarus, who græcised his name into Capnio, he learned something of textual criticism; Pico della Mirandola initiated him into the mysteries of the Cabbala; Mutian had heard a story in Bologna that he had given a Jew ten gold pieces for the explanation of a single Hebrew phrase. His was the pure love of learning for its own sake.

With all this, he was not a professional scholar, but a lawyer and a statesman. He passed the best years of his life in the service of the Dukes of Würtemberg. He became one of the judges who arbitrated in the quarrels of the Swabian League. Once, indeed, when political troubles, to which no more minute allusion need here be made, distracted his adopted country, he spent a year or two at Heidelberg, in the fellowship of that Rhenish literary society which Conrad Celtes had founded, and over which Bishop John von Dal-

berg then presided. But he did not teach in the university, and when the occasion offered returned to his practical work. Still, if no priest, there was about him all the gravity of the German as distinguished from the Italian humanist. He threw the whole energy of his mind, especially in later life, into a certain kind of theology. His only heresy was that of the scholar, who is suspected of wandering in forbidden paths as soon as he passes out of sight of the vulgar. He did not scruple, for instance, to point out errors in the Vulgate, appealing from it to the Hebrew original, and, when reproved, nobly replying, "I revere St. Jerome as an angel; I respect De Lyra as a master, but I adore truth as a God." So, too, his Cabbalistic studies brought him into a certain kind of disrepute. Greek, as the language of schismatics, was abhorred of monkish theologians, how much more Hebrew, the tongue of an accursed race? Otherwise he stood high in general esteem. The Emperor ennobled him, giving him a grant of arms. Men spoke well of him as a lawyer and a diplomatist. All scholars, both in Italy and in Germany, were his friends, looking upon him as a light of modern erudition. A little later Ulrich von Hutten coupled him with Erasmus as "the two eyes of Germany," "to whom we owe it that this nation has ceased to be barbarous."

Reuchlin's contributions to the humanist literature of the time were neither large nor particularly valuable. At the very beginning of his career he had been the author of a Latin dictionary, afterwards he wrote two comedies in Latin, on one of which, *Sergius*, Hieronymus Emser lectured at Erfurt in 1504[1]; nor was he, in truth, an elegant Latinist. The more graceful qualities of scholarship he did not possess. His knowledge of Greek was certainly superior to that of any of his coevals, but he put it to little use. This was partly due to his diplomatic and judicial avocations, but partly also to that devotion to the Hebrew language and literature which was his distinguishing characteristic. There is a tradition that his thoughts were turned in this direction at an early period of his life; but his serious study of Hebrew began with an acquaintance which he formed in 1492 with Jehiel Loans,

[1] Kampschulte, vol. i. p. 66.

the Jewish physician of the Emperor Frederic III. From that time Hebrew was his favourite occupation. Not satisfied with its grammatical study and its application to the interpretation of the Old-Testament, he plunged into that strange weltering sea of Cabbalistic speculation, from which, in common with some of his contemporaries, he believed that the purest pearls of truth were to be drawn. His first book of this kind, *De Verbo Mirifico*, dates from 1494, and is dedicated to John von Dalberg. Then in 1506 he published a Hebrew grammar, which, if not absolutely the earliest of its kind, is the first that deserves the name. Nor were his troubles with the theologians of Köln able to wean him from these cherished studies; in 1517 he dedicated to Leo X a work in three books, *De arte Cabbalisticâ*. Perhaps his truest title to fame is that he was the restorer of Oriental learning in Northern Europe. He performed, though in a less perfect way, for the Old Testament, the task which Erasmus executed for the New; he took men's minds back from the Vulgate to the original text. So far as the Jews themselves were concerned, he was not altogether exempt from the prejudices of his age; but in nothing did he more decisively show himself the true scholar than in not permitting those prejudices to shut him out from the purest sources of Hebrew learning. Nor would it be right to allow Reuchlin's Cabbalistic fancies to weigh against the general sobriety of his scholarship; his was an age which had not yet formulated canons of criticism, and he could plead worthy companionship in his learned delusions. Wieland has well said of him, that "to Oriental literature he uttered the word of power, Come forth! And the dead came forth wound round with Rabbinical grave-clothes, and with the napkin of the Cabbala about his head. The second word, the word reserved for the successors of Reuchlin to speak, was far easier, Loose him, and let him go."[1]

Erasmus was only twelve years younger than Reuchlin. But owing in part to the rapid movement of the times, in

[1] Geiger, p. 195. All earlier lives of Reuchlin, that of Mai (1687), and that of Meyerhoff (1830), have been superseded by L. Geiger's excellent work, *Johann Reuchlin, sein Leben und seine Werke*, 1871. To this may be added *Joh. Reuchlin's Briefwechsel*, edited by Geiger, for the *Literarischer Verein* of Stuttgart in 1875. Conf. Erhard, vol. ii. pp. 147-460; Strauss, *U. v. Hutten*, p. 141 *et seq.*

part to the genius of the man, we seem, in speaking of him, to enter upon a new epoch of literary development. The German humanist, painfully appropriating the classical inheritance, and learning with difficulty to think new thoughts and write a new language, is transformed into the accomplished man of letters who uses Latin with the easy force of a vernacular tongue, and wields an European influence.

Erasmus was born at Rotterdam in or about the year 1467. His real name was Gerhard, which, under the belief that it meant "beloved," he latinised into Desiderius and then incorrectly græcised into Erasmus. The illegitimate son of one who, resisting the desire of his parents that he should enter the monastic life, was afterwards forced by a shameful trick into the cloister, Erasmus began life with a grievance against monasticism which he never forgot. It was made more bitter by his own history. He was half-cajoled, half-forced into the Augustinian house of Steyn, a step which was no sooner taken than repented of. Already, however, his destiny was fixed. He had been a pupil of Alexander Hegius in his well-known school at Deventer, where his proficiency had excited the admiration of the patriarch of German humanism, Rudolf Agricola. From that time forth nothing could quench his inborn thirst for learning. The six years which he passed at Steyn were spent in the study of the classics, though probably the Latin poets and orators only. But in 1491 an unexpected deliverance came. The Bishop of Cambrai, intending to go to Rome, wanted some young scholar as secretary and companion, and for that purpose, with due permission of superiors, took Erasmus out of his convent. The Italian journey, for some reason or other, was never made, but Erasmus was free. Monk and priest as he was, he never returned to the monastic life, which as long as he lived continued to be the object of his deepest dislike, and the mark for his sharpest shafts of satire.

From Cambrai Erasmus made his way to the University of Paris: thence, again, after certain episodes, which it is not necessary to recount, in 1497, to England. He had formed the acquaintance of William, Lord Mountjoy, who assured him of a welcome across the Channel, and told him of men who at Oxford were engaged in the study of Greek. It was the dream of

Erasmus's life to learn Greek in Italy: but how was a poor scholar, dependent upon private teaching and an ill-paid pension, to make the expensive journey across the Alps? Oxford was the next best resource, and to Oxford he went. The journey was full of consequences both to Erasmus himself and through him to European religion. For the next eighteen or nineteen years of his life he constantly revisits England. The Greek that he learns at Oxford he teaches at Cambridge. He studies with Grocyn and Linacre: he knits the closest friendship with Colet and More. One of his chief patrons is William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, who presents him with the Kentish living of Aldington, and to whom in return he dedicates in 1516 his magnificent edition of St. Jerome. He is presented to Henry VIII—then a boy of nine years old, who asks for a tribute of verses, afterwards duly paid. He makes a vivid contribution to English history, in accounts written long afterwards of pilgrimages paid to two of our great national shrines, that of Our Lady of Walsingham, and the still more famous one of St. Thomas of Canterbury, at the very time when faith began to wane, and the axe of reform was hanging over them, ready to fall. In the midst of his English activity he found time and means for the visit to Italy, so necessary to the reputation as well as to the erudition of a scholar, making the acquaintance of learned men, and superintending at Venice the production of a new edition of his *Adages*, by the famous press of Aldus. But he came back to England again, in the hope, which proved delusive, of patronage and employment from the young Henry VIII, in whose love of learning all humanists put their trust.

A scholar who was born in Holland, who had studied at Paris, who had paid repeated visits to England, and who had made the indispensable journey to Italy, had already laid the foundation of an international reputation. But while Erasmus was one of the students who were constantly increasing their store of scholarship, and to whom everything seemed to offer additional materials of erudition, he was also a man of letters, and to some extent a man of the world. Educated Europe had, at that time, but one language, and it was possible, as at no period before or since, for a great writer to make his appeal to readers of every nation.

And Latin, which he wrote with unexampled force and ease, was almost Erasmus's native tongue. His voluminous works contain no word of any other. How far he spoke English with More, or German with Hutten, or Italian with Aldus, we have no means of knowing; probably Latin was almost as much the medium of daily intercourse as it undoubtedly was of familiar correspondence. His Latin was not Ciceronian: indeed his openly-expressed contempt for the pedantic imitation of Cicero brought him in later life into literary trouble; but it was something much better, a language recalled from the lethargy of learning into which it was rapidly falling, to be once more the living vehicle of thought. His *Colloquies*, originally written to teach the use of Latin as a spoken language to the son of his Basel printer, Froben, but in which he embodied many of his most characteristic opinions on men and things, are an admirable example of the way in which a classical language may, in the hands of a master, become plastic to new methods and applications. And his voluminous correspondence, which of itself might almost have been the outcome of a busy lifetime, and gives, to those who have patience to master its contents, a vivid and various picture of the literary life of contemporary Europe, has little of the ceremonial cumbrousness which usually deforms Latin letters, and is almost as modern in form as it is in spirit.

The weapon of style, thus edged and polished, Erasmus used with the skill of an accomplished man of letters. He was not deficient, as we shall presently see, in the graver labours of scholarship; but he also took the public into his confidence. His writings were popular, to an extent which an age in which literature is not necessarily learned finds it difficult to understand. His *Adages*, a collection of Greek and Latin proverbs, with explanations and discursive commentary, were reprinted again and again, always growing in bulk, until they finally occupy the whole of a folio volume in the last edition of his works. They are good reading for scholars still, but only scholars read them. In the early years of the sixteenth century they were read by every one who could read at all. The *Encomium Moriae*, which he wrote at More's house on his return from Italy in 1510, and dedicated to his host, was more popular still. Editions of it appeared in rapid succession:

Holbein illustrated it with his pencil: a French version was published in 1517. Tried by modern standards, its wit seems laboured, and its leading idea too long drawn out, but contemporary readers did not think so; and, in conjunction with the *Adages*, it told a curious world what the first scholar of his day thought of kings and nobles, monks and nuns, and the social system of which these were the pillars. What is now strangest is, perhaps, not that almost every one who could read laughed with Erasmus at established institutions (and the *Colloquies* only deepened the impression which the *Adages* and the *Praise of Folly* had made), but that he kept on friendly and familiar terms with cardinals, princes, and statesmen. The greatest names in the Church (Leo X and Cardinal Wolsey, the Archbishop of Mainz and the Archbishop of Canterbury) are found in the list of his correspondents. In 1514 he was made a member of the council formed for the young prince who, in a few years more, was to be Charles V. It seemed as if the universal admiration for his learning and literary power gave him a place among the potentates of the world, and with it absolute liberty to say what he would. Such a monarchy as his, in the realm of letters, Europe has never since seen: the possibility of it passed away with the disuse of Latin as the universal language of educated men.

But Erasmus was animated also with a serious religious purpose, for which sufficient credit has hardly been given him. He is usually represented as a man who to great learning, a singular command of his pen, and a biting wit, united a timid and time-serving nature, which held him back from hearty sympathy with the Lutheran revolt, and ended by making him its avowed enemy. What elements of truth there may be in this conception of him will appear as the facts of the case unfold themselves; undoubtedly there is a huge preponderance of error. I have already stated that on his first visit to Oxford he became the friend of John Colet, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, and the founder of the famous school of the same name. It may be doubted whether there is evidence to support the theory of a recent writer[1] that Colet, Erasmus, and More

[1] F. Seebohm, *The Oxford Reformers of 1498: being a history of the fellow-work of John Colet, Erasmus, and Thomas More*, 1867.

entered at this time into an unwritten agreement to work together for the reform of the Church, and that Colet's was the leading and inspiring mind of the three. But two things are indisputable—first, that a firm friendship united them all while they lived, and that from the time of his first stay at Oxford Erasmus cherished theological purposes of a very serious and quite distinctive kind. What his general views of Christianity were first came out in his *Enchiridion Militis Christiani*, a little book of practical piety, which, written in 1501, was probably published soon afterwards. But there is this peculiarity about it, that as its author republished it in 1518, with a letter [1] in its defence, it may be taken to represent his matured as well as his earlier opinions. Its tone can best be described as simply and strongly ethical. He alludes to what would be called the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, but does not state, much less define, them. The characteristic superstitions of Catholicism he passes quietly by, placing them in contrast with purely religious aspirations. "Do you therefore forbid, some will say, the worship of the saints in whom God is honoured? Truly, I do not condemn those who do these things with a certain simplicity of superstition. . . . I will commend them for seeking protection of their life from St. Roch, if they will consecrate that life to Christ. I will praise them still more, if they will ask only that with hatred of vice love of virtue also may be increased." [2] Again, "In a visible temple you bend the knee of the body; it is of no avail if in the temple of the heart you stand erect against God. You adore the wood of the Cross; better follow the mystery of the Cross. You fast and abstain from the things that do not defile a man, and do not withhold yourself from obscene words, which pollute both your own conscience and another's. . . . Is it much that with your body you visit Jerusalem while within you is Sodom, is Egypt, is Babylon? It is but little to have trodden in the footsteps of Christ with the feet of the flesh, but a very great thing to follow them in heart and soul." [3] In short, the end

[1] *Ep.* cccxxix. Paulo Volzio, vol. iii. p. 337. I quote from the Leyden edition of the works of Erasmus, 1703.

[2] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. v. p. 27 B, C.

[3] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. v. p. 37 E, p. 38 A.

of all human striving is Christ, and Christ is no empty word, but only love, simplicity, patience, purity; in brief, whatever He taught.[1] This was hardly Catholicism, certainly not the Catholicism accepted in universities and current in convents; but it was just as little Protestantism. A Lutheran of a few years later would have pronounced the *Enchiridion* pagan in grain, and traced its inspiration rather to Epictetus than to Paul.

But whether first moved by Colet or not, Erasmus had a special object in view, and a definite theory of Church reformation. Like all the older German humanists, he deeply felt the practical abuses of the Church, which indeed he had done more than any other man in Europe to hold up to contempt and ridicule. But he looked much farther afield for a remedy than to the disciplinary activity of Popes or the reforming zeal of Councils. Owing perhaps to the fact that he was not brought into contact with it till the bent of his mind had settled itself, and his opinions in some degree become fixed, he had no sympathy with the scholastic theology, which he placed with monasticism in the category of things to be hated and despised. He had himself gone behind the Schoolmen, to the Fathers and the Apostles for his faith, and he saw in the rising tide of learning the opportunity of putting before the eyes of Christendom the primitive in fair contrast with the existing Church. He made up his mind to give the world for the first time the Greek text of the New Testament. This was to be followed by critical editions of the chief Greek and Latin Fathers. Without open revolt against the Church, without other attack upon her corruptions than such as he had been making throughout his literary life, he thought that the desired end must surely come. The leaven of scientific culture would slowly leaven the whole inert lump. The charm of Christianity, thus revealed in its first pure beauty, would be all-prevailing; men would see how simple a thing it was and yet how powerful in the production of a strong and happy life. It was a scholar's conception of reform, and one that was soon interrupted and set aside by ruder and more drastic methods. Yet it may be questioned whether, after

[1] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. v. p. 25 A.

all, the slow way is not in the long run the surest, and whether any other agent of human progress can permanently be substituted for culture. The Reformation of the sixteenth century was Luther's work; but if any fresh Reformation is come or coming now, it can only be based upon the principles of Erasmus.

The first step towards the realisation of this project was the publication in 1505 of Lorenzo Valla's *Annotations upon the New Testament*, with a prefatory letter addressed to Christopher Fischer.[1] This work is less remarkable in itself than as being the first beginning of modern textual criticism of the New Testament; Erasmus expressly claims for Valla, that his emendations were founded upon the collation of certain ancient and correct MSS. But he did not print the book without foreseeing the storm of opposition which it was likely to raise. The objections to which he addresses himself in his letter to Fischer are of the most childish kind, but not on that account less generally entertained or less difficult to overcome. Jerome's Latin was practically regarded as the original text of Scripture, and any attempt to amend it by reference to the Greek and still more to the Hebrew, was regarded as a laying of profane hands upon the ark of God, which no cogency of argument could justify. Then for ten years the matter apparently slept, but only apparently, for Erasmus was gathering materials for two of the great achievements of his life, his Greek New Testament and his edition of Jerome, both of which came to the birth in 1516. But even after this long delay, the first was hurried if not premature. The volume of Cardinal Ximenes's *Complutensian Polyglot*, which contained the New Testament, was in type as early as January 1514, though the completed work did not receive the Papal licence till 1520. And Johann Froben, the printer of Basel, not desiring that the honour of first printing the New Testament in Greek should belong to Spain, made an offer to Erasmus to undertake the task. It was accepted; the work was pushed on with a rapidity fatal to exact workmanship, and in February 1516 the book was published with a preface by the printer, and a dedication from Erasmus's own pen to Leo X. It is a beautifully-printed folio

[1] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 96: *Ep.* ciii.

volume, containing the complete text of the New Testament in Greek, followed by copious annotations.[1]

The defects of the edition, arising from the haste with which it had been prepared, are numerous and on the surface. It is full of small typographical errors. A quaint mistake upon the title-page called into existence a hitherto unknown Father of the Church, Vulgarius. Erasmus's declaration to Leo, "that he had consulted many codices, in both languages, and those not of any kind that might chance, but the oldest and most correct,"[2] is hardly borne out by the scanty list of not very valuable manuscripts that were alone at his disposal. He had no manuscript authority at all for the last six verses of the Apocalypse, and supplied the gap by his own retranslation from the Latin, a proceeding the traces of which are still visible on what is called the Received Text. But having once established their priority, editor and printer set diligently to work to repair their mistakes. In the lifetime of Erasmus four more editions were issued, in 1519, 1522, 1527, and 1535, each of which was an improvement upon the last, except that in deference to ignorant clamour the verse 1 John v. 7, which had been omitted from the editions of 1516 and 1522, as supported by no MS., was inserted in that of 1527. The book had a large sale: of the first two editions put together 3300 copies were printed, and we may conclude that the others were in like proportion.[3]

The Greek Testament of Erasmus is at once the completest homage and the most signal service which the classical revival rendered to theology. It was a scholar's work, and executed in the true spirit of scholarship. Its object was to place within reach of all who could read Greek—a number that

[1] The full title of this great work is: "Novum Instrumentum omne, diligenter ab Erasmo Roterodamo recognitum et emendatum, nō solum ad graecam veritatem, verum etiam ad multorum utriusq; linguae codicum eorumq; veterum simul et emendatorum fidem, postremo ad probatissimorum autorum citationem, emendationem et interpretationem, praecipue Origenis, Chrysostomi, Cyrilli, Vulgarii, Hieronymi, Cypriani, Ambrosii, Hilarii, Augustini, una cum Annotationibus, quae lectorem doceant, quid qua ratione mutatum sit. Quisquis igitur amas veram Theologiam, lege, cognosce, ac deinde iudica. Neque statim offendere, si quid mutatum offenderis, sed expende num in melius mutatum sit. Apud inclytam Germaniae Basileam. [Here follows the printer's mark] Cum privilegio Maximiliani Caesaris Augusti, ne quis alius in sacra Romani imperii ditione, intra quatuor annos excudat, aut alibi excusum importet."

[2] *Novum Instrumentum*, 1516, *aa* 2 b.

[3] See Scrivener, *Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 2d ed. p. 380 *et seq.*

increased every day—the earliest documents of Christianity in the least adulterated form. It was one of the first examples of what we now call a critical edition; most of the classical authors had been printed from any single manuscript which the editor had at his command; for the moment it was thought sufficient that the insecurity of a single written copy should be exchanged for the safety which the multiplying power of the press seemed to offer. But Erasmus recognised not only the fact that the Greek original must be preferable to any version, however venerable and authoritative, but that the text had come down to modern times with many variations. To compare such manuscripts as he could collect, and to choose what readings appeared to him most likely to be correct, was the first tentative beginning of that complicated science of textual criticism which now claims to be able to trace error through the mazes of many centuries, and to place its finger on the indubitable reading of the Post-Apostolic age. After all, the procedure of Erasmus was unscientific rather in its necessary incompleteness than in its method, and in doing all that was possible to him, he performed a service for theology which cannot be over-estimated. But perhaps a more remarkable thing, at least in relation to the generally received ideas as to his character, is the glow of enthusiasm in which he did his work. In a *Paraclesis* or *Exhortation to the Study of the Christian Philosophy*, prefixed to the first edition of the *Novum Instrumentum*, he says: "For I utterly dissent from those who are unwilling that the sacred Scriptures should be read by the unlearned, translated into their vulgar tongue, as though Christ had taught such subtleties that they can scarcely be understood even by a few theologians, or as though the strength of the Christian religion consisted in men's ignorance of it. The mysteries of kings it may be safer to conceal, but Christ wished His mysteries to be published as openly as possible. I wish that even the weakest woman should read the Gospel—should read the Epistles of Paul. And I wish that these were translated into all languages, so that they might be read and understood, not only by Scots and Irishmen, but also by Turks and Saracens. To make them understood is surely the first step. It may be that they might be ridiculed by many, but some

would take them to heart. I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the time of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey."[1] The whole document breathes the same spirit. No more impassioned eulogy of the Scriptures, and of the benefits to be derived from their study, was ever written. From the free intercourse, now made possible between Christ and the mind of his disciples, Erasmus expects everything for the practical life. "This kind of philosophy," he says, "lies rather in the affections than in syllogisms; it is a life rather than a disputation, an inspiration rather than an erudition, a transformation rather than an argument. To be learned lies within the reach of few, but every one may be a Christian, every one may be pious, yea, I will add boldly, every one may be a theologian."[2]

Erasmus's labours on the New Testament were, however, by no means confined to the emendations of the text. His *Annotations* were an important part of the original edition, and the whole work may be said to have been crowned by the *Paraphrases*, which came gradually into being between 1517 and 1524. But although, in these works, he rendered important services to Biblical criticism, he did not take up so clear and scholarly a position in regard to the theory of interpretation as Luther did afterwards. He could not get rid of a respect for those mystical senses of Scripture in which mediæval interpreters so greatly delighted, and by help of which they were able to deduce any doctrine from almost any passage. He says in his *Enchiridion* that if you take it only in its literal sense, the story of Adam is not better worth reading than that of Prometheus. He advises the choice of those interpreters of Scripture "who depart as far as possible from the letter." "What does it matter whether you read the Books of Kings or Judges or Livy's History, if in neither you look to the Allegory?"[3] "The letter," he says, in the preface to the *Annotations*, "is the least part of all; but on this, as on a

[1] I have availed myself of Mr. Seebohm's excellent translation of this passage: *Oxford Reformers*, p. 256; *Nov. Inst.* 1516, *aaa* 4 b.

[2] *Nov. Inst.* 1516, *aaa* 4 d.

[3] *Erasmi Opp.* (*Enchiridion*), vol. v. p. 29 B, C, D; *ibid.* 8 D.

foundation, rests the mystical sense."[1] At the same time, it may be questioned whether from this unpromising beginning he did not make a nearer approach to scientific rationalism than Luther, who started from a sounder principle. All Biblical students know the story of his omission, from his first two editions, of the verse 1 John v. 7, and his subsequent insertion of it in the third, though not without a protest, when a Greek MS. containing the words had been brought under his notice.[2] This critical instance is a fair sample of his procedure. He admits lapses of memory and failures of judgment in the Apostles; Christ alone is called the Truth, and is wholly free from error.[3] He thinks that the Gospel of Mark is an abridgment of that of Matthew,[4] and calls attention to the fact that Luke is not an eye-witness of the events which he relates.[5] He repeats Jerome's opinion that Clement of Rome was very likely the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews,[6] and casts doubt on the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse.[7] From others of his works it would be easy to cite passages in which he subjects even the most sacred mysteries of the faith to free handling. He was much more Scriptural than Athanasius in his assertions as to the Trinity.[8] He resolved the torturing flames of hell into "the perpetual anguish of mind which accompanies habitual sin."[9] Melanchthon declared that the whole Eucharistic controversy had its origin in him.[10] It is plain that we have here all modern rationalism in germ.

[1] *Nov. Inst.* 1516, p. 227.

[2] His note on the passage (*Opp.* vol. vi. p. 1080 D) is, however, couched in terms which show how little he was convinced. "Verumtamen, ne quid dissimulem, repertus est apud Anglos Graecus codex unus, in quo habetur quod in vulgatis deest. . . . Ex hoc igitur codice Britannico reposuimus, quod in nostris dicebatur deesse, ne cui sit ansa calumniandi. Tametsi, suspicor codicem illum ad nostros esse correctum."

[3] Note to Matthew ii. 7; *Opp.* vol. vi. p. 13 E.

[4] Note to Mark i. 1: *Opp.* vol. vi. p. 151 E; Luke i. 2: *Opp.* vol. vi. p. 217 C.

[5] Note to Luke i. 4, 5: *Opp.* vol. vi. p. 218 D.

[6] Note to Hebrews xiii. 18: *Opp.* vol. vi. pp. 1023, 1024.

[7] Note to Apoc. *sub fine*: *Opp.* vol. vi. p. 1124 F.

[8] Adversus monachos quosdam Hispanos: *Opp.* vol. ix. p. 1023 *et seq.*: conf. vol. ix. pp. 1040 B, 1050 D.

[9] *Enchiridion*: *Opp.* vol. v. p. 56 C. "Nec alia est flamma, in qua cruciatur dives ille comessator evangelicus. Nec alia supplicia inferorum, de quibus multa scripsere Poetae, quam perpetua mentis anxietas, quae peccandi consuetudinem comitatur. Tollat igitur qui velit futuri seculi tam diversa praemia; habet annexum sibi virtus propter quod abunde debeat expeti; habet adjunctum peccatum, cujus causa debeat horreri."

[10] Letter of Melanchthon to Camerarius: *Melancth. Opp.: Corpus Reformatorum*, vol. i. p. 1083; conf. Letter to Aquila, *ibid.* vol. iv. p. 970.

This was the climax of Erasmus's life. Nothing that the author of the *Adages* and the *Praise of Folly* could do could add to his literary reputation. In Germany, in Holland, in England, and only in a less degree in France, in Italy, in Spain, he was recognised as the first scholar of his day. All men of erudition, all men of literary accomplishment, all princes and prelates who cared, or wished to seem to care about learning, were his correspondents. His journey to Basel in 1514 was a kind of triumphal progress; the scholars of Alsace and the Rhineland met him, and feasted him as their acknowledged head. In the publication of his Jerome in 1516 he began that series of editions of the Greek and Latin Fathers which were necessary to complete the picture of primeval antiquity, which he desired to place before the eyes of Christendom. He was no mere scholar who had found in ecclesiastical literature a fit field for his powers, but an ardent theologian, eager for the reformation of the Church in doctrine and discipline, and with distinct ideas of his own as to the way of bringing it about. He thought that if he poured the new wine of culture into the old bottles of tradition, there could be but one result, even if long delayed. But he was not a man of combat. He was incapable of dashing himself like a forlorn hope against the serried battalions of ecclesiastical ignorance and bigotry. Always ailing, he did not feel that vigorous physical impulse which is necessary to aggressive heroism. Something of the scorn which often accompanies the consciousness of superior culture was in him; he disliked rough and ready ways, and preferred refined mockery to indignant invective. It must be added that he was not independent of patrons, perhaps did not wish to be. The profits of authorship in those days went to printers and booksellers, and a scholar who did not teach like Hegius, or had not a profession like Reuchlin or Brant, was necessarily dependent upon the liberality of the great. There was held to be nothing derogatory in the acceptance of such liberality, and Erasmus was proud to show the gold medals, the chased goblets, which he had received from Electors and Cardinals. But the feeling that the eyes of all the magnates with whom he desired to stand well were fixed upon him, added to his natural timidity.

Church reformers of Luther's type do not live on terms of friendly intimacy with Popes and Cardinals and Archbishops. Still to all appearance, in 1516, Erasmus was master of the situation. Beyond the little world of which Wittenberg was the centre, Luther, still an Augustinian monk, was unknown. It meant much that the first of northern scholars had openly declared for reform, and in books that were read all over Europe had preached a Christianity from which almost every element of mediæval superstition had dropped away. But it is rarely, if ever, given to scholarship to touch the popular heart, and for the last twenty years of his life it was the fate of Erasmus to see the sceptre of theological supremacy passing from his hands into those of a younger and more resolute rival, and to watch the triumphant progress of a reform with which he felt less sympathy from day to day.[1]

Another prominent figure of the German revival was Ulrich von Hutten. He was so much younger than Reuchlin and Erasmus, and played so large a part in the early years of the Reformation, as to relieve me now from the necessity of doing more than endeavouring to bring his strange, yet on the whole attractive personality before the reader's eye.

He was one of a numerous knightly family settled in mid Germany where Hesse and Franconia meet. Steckelberg, the castle where he was born in 1488, which, half a century earlier, had had an evil reputation as a robbers' nest, was not far from Fulda, the great Benedictine Abbey, which traced its origin back to Boniface. The Huttens were a tough and energetic race; no fewer than thirty of them fought in Maximilian's armies; others were high in the service of the Princes and Prelates who had divided Franconia among them. Ulrich's father, also Ulrich, had abandoned the predatory pursuits of his ancestors, but he was proud of his knightly independence, ready to take part in any blood-feud, and full of contempt for the peaceful arts of life. Why he destined his eldest son and namesake to the cloister we are not told; possibly in pursuance of some vow, or because the boy was from the first of a sickly

[1] The life of Erasmus still needs careful critical examination. But I may acknowledge my obligations to R. B. Drummond's *Erasmus, his Life and Character*, and to F. Seebohm, *The Oxford Reformers of* 1498.

constitution. Whatever may have been the reason, Hutten was sent in his eleventh year to Fulda, first to be educated, and then to be received into the house, one of the oldest and greatest in Germany. Here he remained till 1505, when, able to bear the restraint no longer and aided by his friend Crotus Rubianus, then studying at Erfurt, he made his escape. He had taken no vows, and his father, who seems to have had more than a common share of brutal obstinacy, let him go. The lad, only seventeen years old, was upon the world with no other provision than some knowledge of Latin, and a talent for making verses—and a very hard world he found it.

In none of the German humanists was the passion for movement stronger than in Hutten. Something may be due to the fact that he never had a home; but from this time till his death he is a wanderer—misery, as is her wont, making him acquainted with strange bedfellows. With what funds he began his university life, and why he and Crotus chose reactionary Köln as their place of study, we cannot tell; but they did not remain there long: in the summer of 1506 they are at Erfurt; in the winter of the same year Hutten seeks the University of Frankfurt on the Oder, then newly founded. Here he seems to have taken the degree of Bachelor, but neither now nor in his subsequent legal studies in Italy did he proceed farther on the academic path. Some, at least, of the younger humanists despised the distinctions which the universities had to offer, but which were to be earned only by the old methods, against which their whole lives were a protest; and all the spirit of the newer humanism was embodied in Hutten. In the winter session of 1507-1508 we find his name on the register of the University of Leipzig; then, in the late summer of 1509, he appears on the inhospitable shores of the Baltic, first at Greifswald, then at Rostock, ragged, without resources, completely broken down in health. Whether he had already contracted the terrible and shameful disease which clung to him through life, and has infected his memory, it is difficult to say: nothing can be more pitiful than the account which he gives of his own misery. Yet there is a wonderful spring of recovery in him: a little rest, a

little kindness bring him out of the depths: in some strange way he acquires a marvellous mastery of Latin, and pours forth verses which win him reputation and friends. He is still only twenty-one: surely the possibility of greatness is yet before him.

From Rostock he went to Wittenberg; next to Vienna, and in the spring of 1512 to Italy. Then came what might have been the chance of his life. Returning homewards in 1513, he fell under the notice of an old family friend who had in vain interposed some years before at the crisis of his fate at Fulda, Eitelwolf von Stein. He was a fine specimen of the enlightened statesman, who loved literature and honoured men of letters. It was at his instigation that Joachim I., Margrave of Brandenburg, had founded the University of Frankfurt on the Oder in 1506. When in March 1514, Albert of Brandenburg, already Archbishop of Magdeburg and Administrator of Halberstadt, was chosen Elector Archbishop of Mainz, he brought Eitelwolf von Stein with him as his minister. Men began to entertain the highest hopes for literature in the Rhineland. Frankfurt on the Oder had been a disappointment: founded in the interests of the new learning, the reaction had early taken possession of it. But the University of Mainz, established by a former archbishop, Diether von Isenburg, was to make up for all. It was Eitelwolf's desire to attract thither the best scholars of the time; and the electoral court, presided over by a young and splendid archbishop, was to become the centre point of German culture. For a little while Hutten shared this brilliant dream: work was already found for him, and a permanent place promised, when a single day brought him—as he was trying to repair his shattered health at Ems—the double news, that Eitelwolf was dead, and that his cousin Hans von Hutten had been foully murdered by Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg.

The story of this crime, romantic as it is, cannot be told here. The whole clan of Huttens cried for vengeance, and Ulrich was their mouthpiece in elegy, oration, dialogue. He went back to Italy in 1515, and was still there when the struggle between Reuchlin and the theologians of Köln reached its crisis in the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*. He is not

thirty: still a wanderer, and to be so for the few years that are left him. He has not achieved much, though in many ways he has shown what metal he is made of; and Lucian, whom he has learned to know in Italy, has taught him the art of brilliant and incisive dialogue. His travels have brought him into contact with most learned men on either side the Alps; he has conversed with Reuchlin and Erasmus; he has some little acquaintance with courts, and the ways of the great. Rome, as it was in the pontificate of Julius II and Leo X, he has seen with his own eyes; and in Latin epigrams, which the sight could not but provoke from a man of mocking wit and ready pen, he has begun the war which he was afterwards to wage with such savage earnestness. There is something of the Ishmael about him; he will strike in any direction, so the passion moves him; and till he is fired by enthusiasm for Luther—and even that is more than half political—he is not swayed by deep or lasting moral impulse. But he believes in the new learning with all his heart, and, like most of his fellow-humanists, he is a passionate patriot. And there is such an inexhaustible spring of vitality in him, that, sickly, the butt of fortune, experienced in misery, he is yet able to exclaim, "Learning flourishes, men's minds awaken, in such an age it is a delight to live."[1]

So great an intellectual innovation as that which I have described could not be made without exciting much opposition and raising many controversies. The old scholasticism, though growing stiff and obsolete, and not illustrated by any teacher of original power, held firm possession of the universities, where it still dictated the method of instruction and prescribed the way to honour. It had the Church, and particularly the all-powerful mendicant orders, at its back—in a word, all the forces of intellectual and religious conservatism. Against this must be reckoned the young mental life of the nation, which all

[1] Ranke, vol. i. p. 218.—For Hutten see D. F. Strauss, *Ulrich von Hutten*, 2d ed. Hutten has been exceptionally fortunate: Strauss's biography is all that such a work ought to be, and he has found an editor in Ed. Böcking who leaves nothing to be desired. *Ulrichi Hutteni, equitis Germani, Opera quae reperiri potuerant omnia. Edidit Eduardus Böcking*, 5 vols., Leipzig, 1859-1861, is a magnificent specimen of both German editorship and German typography. Two supplementary volumes (1864-1869), to which I shall have occasion to refer presently, contain the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, with a large mass of illustrative literature.

poured itself into the fresh moulds. There was an enthusiasm for the new learning to which the advocates of the old could show nothing similar. Almost everywhere the battle raged more or less fiercely. Many of the older humanists were devout sons of the Church and never ceased to be her defenders; what suspicion of heresy they fell into was unwittingly incurred. Others went on their way, careless of ecclesiastical approval or censure, and when struck were prompt to strike again. Every university had its humanists, by friends and enemies alike called "poets," who, believing in literary culture, mocked at both the *via Thomae* and the *via Scoti*, and strove to substitute the classics for the schoolmen. They were denounced as teachers who desired to corrupt the purity of youth by the study of obscene pagan poets; as heretics who denied the all-sufficient authority of the Church; and, on the other hand, retorted upon their monkish adversaries with the charge of purblind obscurantism, of ludicrous ignorance of even their own books, of bad logic and worse Latin. Gradually the two parties of the old and the new learning separated themselves, and took up hostile positions: it was well known to which of the two any distinguished churchman or scholar belonged, and it seemed as if each were only waiting for the signal to engage in pitched battle. There was a preliminary skirmish in 1505 and the succeeding years. Jacob Wimpheling, who always prided himself on the soundness of his orthodoxy, published in 1505 a little book of moral theology, *De Integritate*, in which, in strict conformity with historical fact, he asserted that St. Augustine was no monk, and knew nothing of the rule which went by his name. Nothing could be more irritating to the Augustinians; they rushed into the fray, supported by their fellow-mendicants, the Dominicans and the Franciscans; even the Benedictines took the same side. Wimpheling, in a second pamphlet, defended his first assertion; but his opponents, perhaps feeling that they were stronger in authority than in argument, soon appealed to the Pope, and the case was cited to Rome. It does not seem ever to have come to formal trial: in 1514 Leo X, with whom the Emperor Maximilian had used his good offices, pronounced in favour of the old scholar, and imposed silence on his assailants. But by this time the main battle between humanists and

monks was raging, and in the dust that was raised about Reuchlin, Wimpheling was lost to sight.[1]

In the autumn of 1509 Reuchlin, a man of fifty-five, was living in Stuttgart. He had resigned his judicial offices, and intended to pass the rest of his days in literary repose. To him came on a strange errand John Pfefferkorn, a converted Jew, who seems to have felt in no common degree the rage against his former associates which sometimes takes possession of a renegade. Pfefferkorn, full of the idea that the only way to convert Jews into Christians was to deprive them of their books, had sought out the Emperor Maximilian, then busy in Italy with his war against Venice, and had obtained from him a mandate, dated from headquarters at Padua, requiring all the Jews of the Empire to deliver up such of their books as were in any way directed against the Christian religion. Of their noxious character Pfefferkorn himself was to be the judge, and now came to the greatest Christian Hebraist of the age to assist him in his crusade against his people's literature. All the evidence seems to show that he was an ignorant fanatic, who did not know what he was doing; but he may have been misled by the fact that Reuchlin was the official legal adviser of the Dominican order in Germany, which, there as elsewhere, exercised the powers of the Inquisition. Be this as it may, Reuchlin put his visitor off by pointing out some technical errors in the mandate, which his legal knowledge had enabled him to detect, and probably hoped that he should hear no more of him. But Pfefferkorn's bigotry was of the persistent kind; he went to Frankfurt, the seat of a numerous and wealthy Jewish colony, and actually procured the confiscation by the city council of many of their books. He had already achieved a similar success in several of the cities on the Rhine, when the Archbishop of Mainz interposed, not so much for want of sympathy for Pfefferkorn as because he resented his unauthorised activity in his diocese. But the unwearied man conferred with the Archbishop, made a fresh journey to the Emperor, and returned with a new mandate, requiring the Primate to call together certain learned theologians, and, with their consent, to confirm the confiscation of the Jews' books.

[1] Schmidt, vol. i. pp. 49 *et seq.*, 83.

This conference does not seem to have taken place; on the contrary, the affair dragged itself along for some months, till in the summer of 1510 we find Reuchlin, in obedience to a third Imperial command, preparing a report on the whole subject. He executed his task, as a scholar should, in entire independence of what he knew the Emperor and Primate alike wished of him. Jewish books he divided into seven classes, of which only one, that of works directly vituperative of Christianity, he condemned to be burned. All the rest he pronounced, on one ground or other, worthy of preservation. But he did more than this: he defended the right of the Jews to freedom of conscience, both as citizens of the Empire and as having undertaken no obligations to Christianity; and he advocated no harsher method of conversion than the establishment of professorships of Hebrew in the universities. Of other reports which were sent in at the same time from the universities of Mainz, Köln, Erfurt, and Heidelberg, the two first inclined to the side of Pfefferkorn, the two last to that of Reuchlin, although, on the lofty ground of scientific toleration, the old Hebraist stood alone. The end was that Maximilian, to whom the reports were sent, announced in January 1511 his intention of conferring upon the matter with the Estates of the Empire. But, in fact, nothing was done; the books of the Jews were returned to them, and so far as they were concerned, the muttering storm of persecution died away into silence. The question which was now to divide Germany into two hostile camps was not whether the Jews were to be allowed to read their books in peace, but whether Reuchlin was a heretic, and could be made to pay the penalty of heresy.

Pfefferkorn, to whom we cannot deny a certain savage sincerity of bigotry, must have been deeply disappointed with the result. In his rage he turned upon Reuchlin, "holding the mirror up to nature," in a pamphlet called *Der Handspiegel*. To this Reuchlin replied[1] in another, *Der Augenspiegel*. *Mirror* and *Spectacles* alike were written in the vulgar tongue, and both, as was the custom in those days, were much more vigorous than polished in their invective; the pity was to see

[1] Easter, 1511.

one of the greatest scholars of the age descend into the arena of controversy, and there contend on equal terms with a wretched pretender to learning. But the debate might have prolonged itself without substantial harm had not the Dominicans of Köln, with the chief Inquisitor of Germany, Jacob Hoogstraten, at their head, intervened in the fray. They asserted their right, not only to examine the *Augenspiegel*, to ascertain if it contained heretical doctrine, but to bring its author in person to trial. The step was a bold one. It was a declaration of war by the old learning against the new. The first blow was struck against one whom all the younger scholars delighted to honour, and it was proclaimed that the war was to be waged with the old and cruel weapons of persecution.

It is not necessary for our present purpose to tell the story of the Reuchlin case in all its details. First, the theologians of Köln, who had themselves condemned the *Augenspiegel*, submitted it to the judgment of other universities. Louvain, Mainz, even Erfurt, notwithstanding the efforts of Mutian and his friends, censured it, while Paris, the mother of universities, urged by the personal authority of Louis XII, followed the example. Next, as soon as the theological faculty in Köln had spoken, Hoogstraten cited Reuchlin before the tribunal of the Inquisition in Mainz. Again the Archbishop, in all likelihood secretly irritated by the presumption of the Dominicans, interposed, and Reuchlin appealed to Rome. The third stage of the affair was, that Leo X referred the case to the Bishop of Speier, who, with the help of certain assessors, was to hear and decide it. But before the tribunal at Speier had given its decision, the theologians of Köln so far took matters into their own hands as in February 1514 to burn the *Augenspiegel* publicly, an impotent exhibition of spite, as it turned out, for in a few weeks more, Reuchlin was formally acquitted (29th March 1514), and his persecutor condemned in costs. It was now Hoogstraten's turn to appeal, and he went to Rome confident in a full purse and the support of the mendicant orders. That influence, before which even the Pope bent, was sufficient to prevent Reuchlin's acquittal, but it could not procure his condemnation. Leo, whose love for learning was much more sincere than his zeal for orthodoxy,

looked with an eye of kindness upon the persecuted scholar.[1] Maximilian, who at first had done all that Pfefferkorn asked of him, now, with characteristic instability, took the other side. He was supported by electors, princes, bishops, abbots, and no fewer than fifty-three cities of Swabia, who bore witness both to the soundness of Reuchlin's doctrine and the purity of his life. On the other hand, his grandson, soon to be Charles V —also true to himself—lent his influence to the cause of Hoogstraten. In July 1516 a theological commission, which had been appointed to examine the case, reported in Reuchlin's favour, and the two cardinals who officiated as judges might have been expected to confirm the decision, when the Pope stopped the case by a *mandatum de supersedendo*, imposing silence on both parties. He would not condemn Reuchlin; he dared not incur the open enmity of the friars. It is at this point that the general interest of the controversy ceases, but a few words more will bring us to the end of the suit, which may then be dismissed from our story. The theologians of Köln were still carrying on the war in books and pamphlets, when Franz von Sickingen, in his character of a general reformer of abuses, took up Reuchlin's case, probably at the instigation of Ulrich von Hutten. He addressed a letter to Hoogstraten, requiring the Dominicans to write to Rome to announce their retirement from the case, to cease all persecution of Reuchlin, and to pay the costs in which they had been condemned at Speier. Should they fail to comply with these conditions, he signified his intention of ravaging the diocese of Köln with fire and sword. It was impossible to argue with a master of legions; Sickingen's conditions were accepted, the costs paid, and Hoogstraten laid down his office of Inquisitor. But the Church always waits for her opportunity, and never fails to seize it. Within a few months a favourable occasion presented itself. The letter to Rome was declared to have been written under compulsion. Leo X, who by this time had been enlightened by events at Wittenberg, issued, in June 1520,

[1] Franciscus Poggius Florentinus nuper ad Summum Pontificem oravit: Pater Sancte, Ego sumam mihi parteis Reuchlini et volo stare loco ipsius. Legi suas lucubrationes omneis quas habere potui. Homini fit injuria. Cui Pontifex post multa respondit: Noli curare, Poggi, non feremus ut quicquam mali patiatur hic vir. Paul Geraeander to Reuchlin: *Illustrium Virorum Epistolae.*

a brief, quashing the judgment given at Speier: Reuchlin was condemned, and Hoogstraten restored to his functions and dignities.[1]

The progress of this contest was watched with the liveliest interest by the humanists of Germany on the one side, by the monkish theologians on the other. It was felt to be decisive as between the old learning and the new. The object of the Dominican attack was an old and famous scholar, of orthodoxy hitherto unimpeached, second only to Erasmus in width of reputation, and superior even to him in being master of three languages. If Reuchlin could be silenced and put to shame by the Inquisition, what hope for meaner men? The trial was the subject of constant conversation and correspondence among the humanists, and every stage of it was eagerly discussed. Wherever letters were a matter of interest, two parties were formed; Reuchlinist was synonymous with Poet; "Salve Reuchlinista" was a common form of salutation among the friends of learning. Presently the idea suggested itself that some public expression of opinion might assist the persecuted scholar, and in 1514 a collection of letters addressed to him by various distinguished men was published, *Clarorum Virorum Epistolae ad Joannem Reuchlin.*[2] This gave rise in the subsequent year to one of the most successful pasquinades recorded in literary history, the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum.*[3] If Reuchlin had been addressed by his friends, why not his

[1] For the story of the Reuchlin suit see Geiger, p. 205 *et seq.*; Strauss, *U. v. Hutten*, p. 141 *et seq.* Most of the documents in the case are printed either by Hermann von der Hardt, *Historia Literaria Reformationis*, pt. ii., or in the supplementary volumes of Böcking's edition of Hutten's works.

[2] The full title of the book is: "Clarorum Virorum Epistolae, Latinae, Græcae, et Hebraicae, variis temporibus missae ad Joannem Reuchlin Phorcensem, LL. Doctorem." Tübingen, March 1514. In May 1519 a second edition was printed at Hagenau, entitled "Illustrium Virorum Epistolae, Hebraicae, Græcae, et Latinae, ad Joannem Reuchlin Phorcensem, virum nostra aetate doctissimum, diversis temporibus missae, quibus jampridem additus est liber secundus, nunquam antea editus. Reuchlinistarum exercitum pagina invenies mox sequenti." This list, which contains forty-three names, is headed by "D. Erasmus Roterodamus, vir seculi nostri doctissimus, qui Capnionem suis divinis operibus undique purgat ac defendit." Curiously the only English name is that of Bishop Fisher, "Reverend. D. N. Joannes Episcopus Roffensis." The letter of Joh. Cochlearilignеus (*Ep. Obsc. Vir.* pt. ii. No. 59) contains a burlesque list of the same kind, as does also the *Carmen rithmicale Magistri Philippi Schlauraff* (pt. ii. No. 9). Their opponents are, in modern German literature, the "Dunkelmänner," the "Finsterlinge," each of which terms is rather a play upon the word "obscuri" than a translation of it.

[3] The full title of the first edition of the first part is: "Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum ad venerabilem virum Magistrum Ortuinum Gratium Daventrien-

opponents by theirs? It was felt, however, that it would hardly be prudent to choose Hoogstraten as the recipient of these letters; inquisitors, however stupid and ignorant, are dangerous people to laugh at. The selected butt, therefore, was Ortuinus Gratius, professor of polite literature at Köln, who had been a pupil of Alexander Hegius at Deventer, and was supposed by his friends to be as good a poet as any of the profane ones. To him, therefore, were addressed the forty-one letters of a little volume, which appeared in the autumn of 1515. The writers, who bear feigned and grotesque names, and who write the choicest bad Latin (yet, it must be supposed, not much worse Latin than the monks themselves), address to Ortuinus, from all parts of Germany, the most ridiculous questions, ask for news of the Reuchlin prosecution, complain of the treatment which they receive from the poets, are made to display, as if unconsciously, both an astounding ignorance and a revolting coarseness of life and conversation. The squib was a success; a second and a third edition were published in 1516, to the last of which an appendix of seven fresh letters was added; while in 1517 a second part, containing sixty-two more letters (afterwards again enlarged by eight), completed the work. By this time Reuchlin's trial at Rome was in a state of suspended animation, and the effect of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* was to summon the theologians of Köln before a new tribunal, which unanimously condemned them. All Germany, except the monks and their friends, laughed and applauded; nor did it lessen the laughter and applause when in March 1517 Leo forbad all good Christians to possess or read the book, on pain of excommunication.[1]

The *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* is one of the few satires that has not lost its salt by lapse of time. It is indeed quite untranslatable; much of its peculiar humour depends upon the vileness of the Latin in which it is clothed. But it is so

sem, Coloniae Agrippinae bonas literas docentem: variis et locis et temporibus missae, ac demum in volumen coactae." It bore on the colophon the imprint of Aldus Manutius at Venice, "annoque supra." Köln, Hagenau, and Mainz have all been mentioned as the place where the book was really printed.

[1] A copy of this brief was incorporated with the *Lamentationes Obscurorum Virorum*, in which Ortuinus Gratius ineffectually endeavoured to borrow his opponents' weapons of satire. It will be found in the supplement to Böcking's edition of Hutten's works, vol. i. p. 335.

complete and consistent a presentation of the intellectual condition of a period and a class, the characters are made to reveal themselves with so charming an unconsciousness, the incidents, if often coarse, are so genuinely amusing as to make it still a laughter-moving book. How far, taking the necessary exaggerations of satire into account, is it a fair picture? It cannot have been grossly unfair, if we may believe Erasmus and More, that monks both in Brabant and in England took the book seriously as a genuine tribute of respect to Ortuinus, and a blow on the right side, and were only undeceived by the universal laughter.[1] Its Latinity answers to what we know of the state of scholarship before the revival of learning, while its accusations against monkish morality only add another note to the accordant testimony of all literature from the thirteenth century downwards. But in truth no vigorous counter-plea was ever urged. The cause was suffered to go by default. The Köln theologians were angry enough; so angry that they even attempted to fight their adversaries with their own weapons. But their shafts of satire were both weak and aimless, and they found Papal censures their best resource. The controversy, such as it was, soon died away in the noise of the more serious collision between Luther and the Papacy.

Who was the author of these letters? General surmise soon fixed upon Ulrich von Hutten and his friend Johann Jäger, better known as Crotus Rubianus, one of the Erfurt humanists who owned Mutian as their chief. And with certain modifications, recent research has come to the same conclusion. Hutten, however, was in Italy when the *Epistolae* were published: and in August and September 1516 wrote two letters[2] to the English scholar, Richard Crocus, then in Leipzig, which have been taken to prove, on the one hand, that he had no share in the authorship of the book, on the other that he was guilty of a deliberate attempt to conceal the fact that he had. In the first he says that he has heard that the *Letters* have been published in Germany; in the second, a few days later in date, he mentions that he has now received a copy, and hears that he is suspected of having written them. But in neither

[1] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii.: *Ep.* dccccLxxix. p. 1110 C. Appendix: *Ep.* LXXXVII. p. 1575 A.

[2] *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. i. pp. 124, 125.

of them is there anything inconsistent with the supposition that he knew of the book beforehand, and had been admitted to the secret councils of its authors. But whether he had to do with the first part of the *Letters* or not, there can be no doubt of the presence of his hand in the second. Many of them are dated from Rome, and show a minute acquaintance with details of life in the Holy City, which could belong only to a resident. We hear of him as reading similar letters to his friends at Bologna, while, in a letter to Erasmus in July 1517, he distinctly identifies himself with those upon whom the Papal Brief inflicted the penalty of excommunication.[1] To Crotus, however, as the original conceiver of the plan of the *Letters* and probably their editor, many converging lines of evidence point. Long afterwards, in 1532, when he had taken refuge in the ancient Church, he was made the object of a violent attack by an anonymous writer, once supposed to be Justus Jonas, but now more probably identified with Justus Menius, both of whom were zealous Lutherans, and both students at Erfurt. In this document[2] the fact that Crotus was the chief author of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, and that Hutten was his coadjutor, is spoken of as universally known; and Crotus is even reminded of the way in which he had been wont to go about, making notes on his tablets of anything that might serve his purpose. Further than this into the question of authorship it is not necessary to go. Eoban Hess, Petrejus, and possibly some other of the Erfurt humanists may have had a share in the book, but no one can now say what, or how great. Its spirit is that of Crotus, a humorist, who, if he had a serious purpose underneath his laughter, loved the laughter itself better. Had Hutten inspired it, the satire would have had a sharper edge, a more definite moral. The creator of the *Obscure Men* loves his puppets while he smiles at their antic ways; no seriousness, as from a dissolving world, broods over him, and he changes sides at last, in all likelihood, conscious of no broken allegiance.

The *Letters of the Obscure Men* were not the only literary

[1] Tuum Huttenum amare ne desine, rumpantur ut ilia obscuris viris, qui jam, qua nos excommunicamur, ingentem circumferunt bullam, bene bullam, quid enim tumidius, quid imbecillius? *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. i. p. 147.

[2] *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. ii. p. 456.

form taken by the joy of the German humanists in the victory which they had won. In 1517 Pirckheimer prefixed to his translation of Lucian's dialogue, *The Fisherman*, an *Apologia pro Reuchlino;* while Hutten wrote a *Triumphus Capnionis*,[1] a poem of more than a thousand hexameters, which he published under a feigned name in 1518. Erasmus joined in the fray after his own fashion. As undisputed head of the religious humanists it is his business to take sides with Reuchlin, and he is not wanting. He acts, it is true, in an independent way; he does not march in line with the army of the Reuchlinists; as one of the "obscure men" says, "Erasmus est homo pro se."[2] The two men met at Frankfurt in April 1514: Erasmus was on his way to Basel, Reuchlin had just left Speier, where judgment had been given in his favour. The elder scholar placed in the hands of the younger a brief statement of his case, with a request that he would bring it under the notice of the English humanists; the result being expressions of hearty sympathy on the part of both Fisher and More.[3] But Erasmus did much more than this. We find him writing, within a few weeks, to Leo X, to Cardinal Grimanus, to Cardinal Raphael of St. George, pleading the cause of his friend, in the warmest terms.[4] But with the publication of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* a change comes over him. At first he is said to have enjoyed them like other people; two of them, one ascribed to Crotus, another to Hutten, he was reported to have committed to memory, and often recited upon festive occasions.[5] But presently he began to think them too personal; they might get him into trouble with great men with whom he was anxious to stand well; his own theological position was not altogether safe, and it was imprudent to provoke Inquisitors too far. In August 1517 he wrote a letter to Caesarius,[6] which Pfeffer-

[1] *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. iii. p. 413.

[2] Tunc quaesivi ab aliis an etiam Erasmus Roterodamus esset cum eis. Respondit mihi quidam Kaufmannus dicens: 'Erasmus est homo pro se. Sed certum est quod nunquam erit amicus illorum theologorum et fratrum, et quod ipse manifeste in dictis et scriptis suis defendit et excusat Johannem Reuchlin, etiam scribens ad Papam." *Epp. Obsc. Vir.* pt. ii. *Ep.* 59.

[3] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 1524: App. *Ep.* v.

[4] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. pp. 141, 144, 149: *Epp.* cxxvii. clxviii. clxxiv.

[5] Justus Menius? *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. ii. p. 460.

[6] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. App. p. 1622: *Ep.* clx.

korn and his friends did not fail to publish, complaining of the introduction of his own name into the second part of the *Letters*, and finding fault with the personal character of their satire. He himself, he said, had lashed folly; but he had never touched any man's reputation. Again in 1519 he attempted to mediate with Hoogstraten,[1] writing him a letter, which, while it breathed the spirit of Christian moderation, did nothing to conciliate the Inquisitor, and drew down on himself the remonstrances of the humanists.[2] By this time Luther has appeared upon the scene, and Erasmus, too keen-sighted not to see the connection between Reuchlin's case and his own, redoubles his caution. "What have I to do," he asks again and again, in various phrase, "with the cause of Reuchlin and of Luther?" He hardly knows Reuchlin; he says he has only seen him once or twice. The Cabbala and the Talmud are things he does not care about.[3] To the Pope and Cardinals he assumes an apologetic tone; he is anxious to separate himself from audacious innovators and reckless reformers. Yet this cowardly and selfish mood passed away in its turn, and in the third edition of his *Colloquies*, published in 1522, was found a dialogue called the *Apotheosis of Reuchlin*. The great Hebrew scholar was dead, and this was the elegant and touching tribute which Erasmus laid upon his grave.[4]

Whether any result of reform, or what, would have followed upon this collision between the Renaissance and the Papacy it is impossible now to say. Luther intervened, and gave the current of the times a new direction. Many of the Erfurt humanists threw in their lot with him; Hutten was, for the

[1] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 484: *Ep.* cccclii.

[2] *Hutteni cum Erasmo expostulatio, Opp.* vol. ii. p. 192.

[3] Primum illud praefandum est, mihi neque cum Reuchlini negotio, neque cum Lutheri causa quicquam unquam fuisse. Cabbala et Thalmud, quicquid hoc est, meo animo nunquam arrisit. . . . Primum enim, quid rei bonis studiis cum fidei negotio? deinde, quid mihi cum causa Capnionis ac Lutheri? *Ep.* cccclxxvii., to the Archbishop of Mainz: *Opp.* vol. iii. pp. 514 A, 516 F. Conf. *Ep.* cccxvii., to Wolsey, vol. iii. p. 322 B, F.

[4] It is entitled "De incomparabili heroe Joh. Reuchlin in divorum numerum relato." A Franciscan monk sees in a vision Reuchlin conducted into heaven, under the especial escort of St. Jerome. The interlocutors in the dialogue express their intention of counting him among the saints, and the whole winds up with a collect in his honour. "Amator humani generis Deus, qui donum linguarum, quo quondam Apostolos tuos ad Evangelii praedicationem per Spiritum tuum Sanctum coelitus instruxeras, per electum famulum tuum Joh. Reuchlinem mundo renovasti," etc. *Erasmi Opp.* vol. i. p. 692.

brief remnant of his life, his hot partisan; Melanchthon, the most illustrious of the rising scholars of Germany, became his friend and helper. But Reuchlin, Erasmus, Mutian, Crotus, all died in the ancient communion, having lived long enough to learn what the new Church had to offer them, and to reject it. The dividing line of the age in Germany was no longer between Monks and Humanists, but between Papalists and Reformers.

CHAPTER IV

LUTHER'S LIFE PRIOR TO HIS REVOLT FROM ROME

MARTIN LUTHER was born at Eisleben on the 10th of November 1483.[1] His father was Hans Luther; his mother Margarette, whose maiden name was Ziegler,[2] came of an old and honourable family, residing in the neighbourhood of Eisenach. The child was born between ten and eleven o'clock at night, and was baptized on the 11th of November in the Church of St. Peter at Eisleben, receiving the name of the saint of the day, Martin.

[1] There is a dispute, incapable of precise settlement, as to the year of Luther's birth. Such chronological indications as have, with great care, been collected from his works, point in some cases to 1483, in some to 1484, in some may be interpreted either way. It looks as if Luther himself, and Melanchthon with him ("anno puto esse 1484": *Corp. Ref.* vol. iv. p. 1053), had been for some time uncertain upon the point, though they finally settled down upon 1483. Melanchthon in his *Historia de vita Lutheri* thus gives the testimony of Luther's family. He is speaking of his mother: "Haec mihi aliquoties interroganti de tempore, quo filius natus est, respondit, diem et horam se certo meminisse, sed de anno dubitare. Adfirmabat autem natum esse die decimo Novembris, nocte post horam undecimam, ac nomen Martini attributum infanti, quod dies proximus, quo infans per baptismum Ecclesiae Dei insertus est, Martino dicatus fuisset. Sed frater ejus Jacobus, vir honestus et integer, opinionem familiae de aetate fratris hanc fuisse dicebat, natum esse anno a natali Christi 1483" (*Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 156). There were, however, astrological reasons, which might induce either friend or foe to substitute 1484 for 1483, and which probably weighed with Melanchthon in the opinion above quoted. Conf. Köstlin, *Studien u. Kritiken*, 1873, p. 135 *et seq.*; Seidemann, *ibid.* 1874, p. 309 *et seq.*; Köstlin, *ibid.* 1874, p. 315 *et seq.*

[2] Up to a quite recent period it was supposed that the maiden name of Luther's mother was Lindemann. So the modern biographers, Jürgens, Meurer, Köstlin (1st ed.) But Knaake (*St. u. Kr.* 1881, p. 684 *et seq.*) seems to have established that her name was Ziegler, and Köstlin (3d ed.) has accepted his conclusions. The error seems to have arisen out of a confusion with Luther's grandmother, on the father's side, whose name was Margarette Lindemann.

Hans Luther was a native of Möhra, a village which lies south of Eisenach, about half-way to Schmalkalden, and not far from Salzungen. Here the Luthers occupied and still occupy a respectable station, as peasants, tilling their own land. The Reformer's testimony to the condition of his ancestors is explicit. "I am a peasant's son; my father, grandfather, forefathers, have been right peasants."[1] Attempts have been made to affiliate the Luthers of Möhra upon a noble family of the same or a similar name, which had been long settled in the neighbourhood of Fulda. There is, however, no evidence to support the affiliation, except the name itself, not, in its various forms, an uncommon one, and some alleged resemblance of armorial bearings, which does not stand the test of strict examination. Another tradition, less intrinsically improbable, though not supported by adequate evidence, connects the Luthers of Möhra with one Fabian Luther von der Heede (Heide) who in 1413 was ennobled, with a grant of arms, by the Emperor Sigismund. But it is difficult to see how, in the comparatively short period of fifty years, his alleged descendants at Möhra should have forgotten their nobility, and settled down into the condition of peasants. It is at once safest, and most in accord with the probabilities of the case, to abide by the Reformer's own statement.[2] The Luthers still remain in Möhra,

[1] *T. T.* (*Tischreden*, ed. Förstemann) vol. iv. p. 578; *Coll.* (*Colloquia*, ed. Bindseil) vol. ii. p. 153. Conf. vol. iii. p. 177.

[2] Vide *Geschichtliche Notizen über Martin Luther's Vorfahren*, von K. Luther. He makes Fabian one of the old Luthers of Fulda, and represents his coat of arms, not as having been granted for the first time, but only improved and augmented. Conf. Köstlin, *St. u. Kr.* 1871, p. 15. Melanchthon's phrase (*Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 156) is "vetus familia et late propagata mediocrium hominum." As to the armorial bearings the allegation is that Jacob Luther, the Reformer's brother, used the coat of arms granted by the Emperor Sigismund to Fabian, and that Martin Luther's children afterwards adopted it. These are facts which it must be left to heralds to investigate. It is at least possible that the Fabian-Luther coat of arms owes its origin to the family pride of those who wished to be considered his descendants. A white rose is said to have formed part of the shield; while there is no doubt that Luther adopted as his device a white field-rose in full bloom, with a heart in the midst of it, and on the heart a cross (see his description of this device in a letter to L. Spengler, De W. vol. iv. p. 80). It is engraved more than once by Juncker, *Das Guldene u. Silberne Ehrengedächtniss D. Martini Lutheri*, pp. 223, 230, 552, who adds the legend, "Des Christen Herz auf Rosen geht, Wenn's mitten unter dem Kreutz steht." It will also be found on the frontispiece of J. A. Fabricius's *Centifolium Lutheranum*. That this device was adopted by Luther as early as 1520 appears from the fact that it forms part of the illuminated page with which, according to custom, Crotus Rubianus began the record of his Rectorship of Erfurt University in the

where it is said that the type of countenance which the art of Cranach has made familiar to all newer time is yet to be seen. In 1536, according to a tax register of Salzungen, there were five Luther families in the village, all belonging to the class of yeomen, and living on well-stocked farms. The same number appear in 1862; before 1880 two seem to have died out.[1] This tenacity of local and family life speaks well for the race. They were able to hold their own; and if the rural archives are to be trusted, did not always wait for the intervention of the law to seize it.[2]

The name was variously spelled—Luder, Lüder, Ludher, Luther, and Luthar. In the register of the University of Erfurt we find two forms, Martinus Ludher and Martinus Luder. At Wittenberg the Reformer was matriculated as Martinus Lüder. In the list of the Deans of the Faculty of Theology in the same University his name is given indifferently as Luder and Lüder. It is not till the summer session of 1517 that the form Luther makes its appearance. On the other hand, the earliest letter of Luther's which has come down to us, that addressed to John Braun, on the 22d April 1507, is signed "Frater Martinus Lutherius," though in 1516 and 1517 the form Luder occurs again. The Reformer was not consistent in the explanations which he gave of the origin of his name. Sometimes he derived it from Lothair (Chlothar), more frequently from "Lauter." The meaning he put upon the word may be gathered from the fact that when his old friend and physician Ratzeberger wished him to stand godfather to his daughter he

Michaelmas of that year. His own device, a hand holding a horn (his name was Jäger), appears in the centre of the page, and is surrounded by the arms of the leaders of this revolt. The date is significant; in 1520 the Reformers and the humanists had not parted company, and the devices at each corner of the page are those of Luther, Erasmus, Reuchlin, and Mutian. This very interesting page is engraved by Weissenborn, *Acten der Erfurter Universität*, pt. ii. p. 316.

[1] Köstlin, *St. u. Kr.* 1871, p. 18; Köstlin, *M. Luther*, vol. i. p. 20.

[2] Vide *Möhra, der Stammort Dr. M. Luthers v. J. C. Ortmann.* A son of Fabian Luther's was Heintz, of whom a characteristic story is told. He was commandant of the fortress of Ziegenhain in Hesse. "When the Imperial troops had taken the Landgrave prisoner, they came before the fortress with the threat that unless Heintz Luther would give it up, they would bring the captive Landgrave and hang him before his eyes. Whereupon he answered, 'If the Landgrave is yours, this fortress is mine; do with him as you will; I shall do with it as I will.'" Plainly a man not unworthy to be an ancestor of Martin Luther. K. Luther, *Notizen*, p. 27.

called her Clara, "because," he said, "'Lauter' and 'Klar' are cousins." Sometimes he signed himself "Martinus Eleutherius," with an evident allusion to ἐλεύθερος, and at least once, in an access of humility, "M. Luther, Christi lutum." The last two signatures are evident playing upon words: the Reformer's other utterances may be taken as sober, if not very certain etymologies.[1]

But how came Martin Luther to be born in Eisleben? The old story was that Margaret Luther had gone there to attend a fair, and had been suddenly taken in labour. But against this two considerations are decisive: first, that Eisleben is fourteen German miles from Möhra, and next that there is no trace of any fair that was wont to be held there on or about the 10th of November. Another tradition is that Hans Luther had found it expedient to quit Möhra, to escape the consequences of a homicide, which he had half-involuntarily committed. The story, in its earliest form, goes back to 1537, when we find the first mention of it in the letters of George Witzel,[2] a well-known convert from Protestantism, and a bitter enemy of Luther and the Reformation. It was not till a much later period that it took root at Möhra, where the field in which the deed was committed is now shown to the curious. But the fact cannot be said to be vouched for by adequate evidence; and it is easy to find a more probable cause for the migration. Not far from Möhra were deposits of copper ore, which had been worked from an early period. Hans Luther at Mansfeld was a miner, and so

[1] Weissenborn, *Acten*, pt. ii. p. 219; Förstemann, *Album Academiae Vitebergensis*, p. 28; Förstemann, *Liber Decanorum Facult. Theo. Acad. Viteberg.* pp. 4, 12, 13, 20; De W. vol. i. pp. 3, 73, 75, 76, vol. iii. p. 222; Ortmann, p. 77; Erl. *Opp. Exeg.* vol. x. p. 89 (*Enarrationes in Genesin*). "Meum cognomen proprium est Lyder; Saxonice *Luder*, id est *Lauther*. Adversarii Lother et Luther fecerunt." *Coll.* vol. ii. p. 254. Luther was preceded at Erfurt by a namesake Peter Luder, one of the earliest of the German humanists. He appears in the matriculation list of Michaelmas 1460. Weissenborn, *Acten*, pt. i. p. 281; Kampschulte, *Erfurt*, vol. i. p. 31. It need not be said that many attempts have been made to get the number of the beast 666 out of Martin Luther. For some of them see Ortmann, *Möhra*, p. 90.

[2] G. Wicelii, *Epp. Lib.* iv. 1537. "Sed si ita commodet caussae publicae, possim ego patrem Lutheri tui homicidam dicere." The book is not paged, but this passage occurs in a letter in the 4th book. It is entitled *Contra Fures alienae Epistolae, et eosdem Criminatores alienae Famae*, and was written from Eisleben in 1535, where Witzel at that time was preaching. May not the story represent some local gossip of a place where the Luthers must have been well known? Ortmann, p. 114.

probably the Luthers in Möhra too sought the hidden treasures of the earth, as well as tilled its surface. What more likely than that it should be necessary for one of the family to seek his fortune at a distance, and that Hans Luther was attracted first to Eisleben and afterwards to Mansfeld by the mining industry which had recently received a great impulse in that neighbourhood?[1] We may conjecture from the shortness of his stay at Eisleben that the venture there was unsuccessful; at Mansfeld, after a few years' hard work, he laid the foundations of a modest prosperity.[2]

The struggle was, however, for some time, a very hard one. "My father," says Luther, "was a poor miner; my mother carried all her wood upon her back."[3] Presently things mended, and Hans Luther became the proprietor of two furnaces, paying royalty for the one which he dug and smelted to the Counts of Mansfeld. The family was large; besides Martin, the eldest, there were at least three sons and as many daughters. Two of the sons died of the plague before 1507;[4] the third, Jacob, and the husbands of the daughters we shall meet again. Both Hans Luther and his wife were persons of great strength and uprightness of character. Melanchthon says of the former "that for his integrity he was greatly beloved by all good men"; of the latter, "that while there were in her the other virtues which become an honourable matron, yet in her were especially conspicuous modesty, the fear of God, prayerfulness; and other honourable women looked up to her as an example of virtue."[5] Luther himself always alludes to his parents in the most tender and respectful terms, acknowledging the deep

[1] If Hans Luther were the eldest son, this would be all the more likely. His son says (Erl. *Opp. Exeg.* vol. xi. p. 167, *Enarrationes in Genesin*), "In mundo autem quando multi filii sunt, jure civili minimus natu haeres est domus paternae," and this law of inheritance certainly prevailed in some parts of Saxony, Köstlin, *St. u. Kr.* 1871, p. 29. Conf. Ortmann, p. 112; Ratzeberger, *Handschriftliche Geschichte*, p. 41.

[2] Melanchthon (*Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 156) distinctly represents both parents as living at Eisleben at the time of the child's birth. Coelius, in the funeral sermon for Luther preached at Eisleben, 20th February 1546, says that his parents lived six months in that town before removing to Mansfeld. Walch, vol. xxi. p. 305.

[3] *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 160.

[4] Tentzel, *Historischer Bericht*, vol. i. p. 147.

[5] *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 156. Spalatin (apud Mencken: *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum praecipue Saxonicarum*, vol. ii. p. 611) was, in 1522, greatly struck with the resemblance, both in bearing and feature, which Luther exhibited to his mother.

obligation under which he lay to them. He adopted their names into his marriage service — "Hans, wilt du Grethe haben?" He wrote to Melanchthon on occasion of his father's death, "Therefore, in my sadness, I do not write now at length, because it is both right and pious that I, as a son, should lament such a parent, by whom the Father of Mercies begot me, and who, by his sweat, has nourished and formed me into what I am."[1] Presently Hans Luther made money, was personally known to the Counts of Mansfeld whose ore he worked; and finally became a member of the City Council. When he died, his property, for the friendly division of which among his children a document in the Reformer's own hand provided, was estimated at 1250 gulden.[2]

With all this, the rule in Hans Luther's house was a hard one. He and his wife firmly believed and acted upon the maxim, that to spare the rod was to spoil the child. Martin Luther cordially approved of this theory of education in after years, even though he may have found it a little harsh in its application to himself; many passages in favour of a judicious parental severity may be quoted from his writings. At the same time it was his opinion that "the apple should be with the rod." On one occasion, he says, his father beat him so severely that it was long before they made friends again. On another, his mother was the executioner, and thrashed him till the blood flowed, all on account of a nut; "so that," said he, "the severe and harsh life which I led with them was the reason that I afterwards took refuge in the cloister, and became a monk." "They meant it," he added, "heartily well, but they could not discern dispositions, according to which corrections should be tempered." Things were no better at school. There he was one day beaten fifteen times in a single morning. Such schools as that of which he himself had wretched experience he calls "prisons," "hells," "purgatories." The masters were tyrants and jailors, knowing only one method, that of brutal severity. The children were genuine

[1] De Wette, vol. iv. p. 33.

[2] Ratzeberger, p. 42; Erl. vol. xxvii. p. 76: *Erklärung etlicher Artikel in seinem Sermon v. d. heiligen Sacrament; Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 156; Walch, vol. xxi. 1592. A gulden, according to Köstlin (*M. L.* vol. i. p. 26), was equivalent, in the first half of the sixteenth century, to from fifteen to twenty marks of present German money.

"martyrs." And, after all, little was learned. In one emphatic passage he speaks of the "hell and purgatory of schools where we were inwardly tortured with *Casualibus et temporalibus*, and yet with all the beating, trembling fear, and wretchedness, learned absolutely nothing." "Is it not a misery," he says in another place, "that a boy must study twenty years or more, for the sole purpose of learning as much bad Latin as will enable him to become a parson, and to read mass?" One pleasant recollection of the Mansfeld schooldays alone survives. In 1544, two years before he died, Luther wrote, in a Bible belonging to his brother-in-law, Nicholas Oemler, these words, "To my good old friend, Nicholas Oemler, who, more than once, carried me, when a little child, in his arms to and from school, when neither of us knew that one brother-in-law was carrying another."[1]

Of the school at Mansfeld we know very little. Mathesius calls it a "Latin" school, and says that Luther there learned "industriously and quickly his Ten Commandments, Child's Belief, Our Father, with Donatus's Child's Grammar, Cisio Janus, and Christian Hymns."[2] Almost all schools, in those days, were directly or indirectly under the control of the clergy. The masters were men who had taken minor orders, and were looking forward to rising in the Church. The revival of letters had yet hardly penetrated the Universities, and was far enough from touching the school of such an unimportant place as Mansfeld. The methods and objects of education were alike clerical. In the letter which, in 1524,[3] Luther addressed "to the Councillors of all German cities, that they should set up and maintain Christian schools," he complained that the decay of the monastic life was bringing with it a decay of education; common people did not see the necessity of teaching children who were not to be priests, monks, and nuns. Against the learning of the Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, the Paternoster, and Christian Hymns, as the foundation of a religious training, there is nothing to be said; but that the

[1] *T. T.* vol. iv. pp. 76, 129, 130, 542; Erl. *Opp. Exeg.* vol. viii. p. 198 (*Enarrationes in Genesin*); Deutsche Schriften, vol. xxii. pp. 191, 196 (*An die Rathsherren aller Städte*, etc., *dass sie christliche Schulen aufrichten und halten sollen*); De W. vol. v. p. 709.

[2] Mathesius, p. 3 A.

[3] Erl. D. S. vol. xxii. p. 168 *et seq.*

secular education of a clever boy, up to the age of fourteen, should have been confined to Donatus and Cisio Janus, is very significant of the low ebb to which letters had fallen. Donatus was a Roman grammarian of the fourth century, the teacher of Jerome, and the author of a Latin Grammar, which fixed itself firmly, and almost to the exclusion of any other in mediæval use. Its vogue may be inferred from the fact that it was engraved on wooden blocks before the invention of printing, and was one of the first books to be committed to the press. At the same time it had gradually suffered mutilation and corruption, and when learned by rote, without any intelligent explanation, can hardly have been satisfying or stimulating food to a youthful mind. "Cisio Janus" was far worse. It was a "memoria technica" of the tenth or eleventh century, containing in barbarous verses an ecclesiastical calendar. The following are the two first lines:—

"Cisio Janus Epy sibi vindicat; Oc Feli Mar An
Prisca Fab Ag Vincenti Pau Pol Car nobile lumen."

Without expounding its precise method, it will be enough to say that Janus stands for January; Cisio for the Feast of the Circumcision; Epy for Epiphany, and so on. Stones for bread this, chaff thrice winnowed for grain![1]

In the almost total absence of direct evidence it is difficult to reconstruct Luther's childhood. Yet the attempt must be made at least to describe the circumstances in which he lived, and which must have had a share in the formation of his character. Thuringia had been the scene of Boniface's labours, and had been won by him at once to Christianity and to civilisation. Tradition declared that the Chapel at Möhra had, with many more, been founded by him. Well-endowed convents were plentiful in the land, and other ecclesiastical

[1] Gräfenhahn, *Geschichte der Klassichen Philologie*, vol. iv. p. 106; Jürgen's *Luther's Leben*, vol. i. p. 172. The schoolhouse at Mansfeld (at least so far as its ground floor is concerned) still exists, and in 1839 was permitted by Royal decree to call itself the "Luther's Schule." A more important matter is that it was the object of Luther's care in his last days. Two days before he died he concluded an agreement between the Counts of Mansfeld which settled, among other disputed matters, the constitution and endowment of the school. De W. vol. v. p. 792. Krumhaar, *Luther's Vaterhaus in Mansfeld*.

corporations were wealthy and powerful. I have already pointed out that the last years of the fifteenth century were a period of great religious excitement in Germany, that new saints and new devotions came up, and that the disputes as to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin had the effect of enthroning her parents, St. Joachim and St. Anna, in the affections of the faithful. But these new saints, however heartily adopted, did not displace from popular esteem and affection older objects of reverence, such as St. Elizabeth of Marburg, who, besides being the very type of mediæval holiness, was of the race of native princes, and had a gracious humanity about her which drew all hearts. Still it would be a mistake to suppose that Thuringia was simply and happily orthodox. The Flagellants had swept in a storm of pious passion through the land. The doctrines of Wiclif and of Hus had worked below the surface of society. Of a sect, called the Brothers of the Cross, ninety-one were in 1414 burned at Sangerhausen.[1] On the other hand, there was an obstinate but half-unconscious adhesion to old Paganism, which lasted far into Christian times. In 1462 a Bishop of Halberstadt thought it necessary to issue an edict against the worship of "the good Lubbe," who, near Schochwitz, not far from Mansfeld, was honoured with oblations of the bones of animals. And Pastor Coelius in the funeral sermon for Luther, which he preached at Eisleben in 1546, alludes to the worship near Mansfeld of "the good Lutze," as well as of the "Weidenstock" —which the people called "Gedut."[2]

Closely connected with this were other superstitions, some of which claimed a Christian origin. Every one knows how large a part good and bad angels played in Luther's life, and how, to the entire exclusion of the idea of natural law, he ascribed to their influence all human misfortunes and deliverances. But only readers of the *Table Talk* can have any conception of the wild absurdity of the stories of demoniacal action and possession to which he gave unquestioning credence. This was a survival

[1] Bensen, *Geschichte des Bauernkriegs in Ost Franken*, p. 42. [Gieseler, *K. G.* vol. ii. pt. iii. p. 276 *et seq.*]

[2] Förstemann, *Neue Mittheilungen*, vol. iii. pp. 1, 130; vol. v. pp. 2, 110; vol. vi. pp. 1, 25. An enormous mass of animal bones was removed from the so-called Knockenberg, near Schochwitz, early in the present century. Walch, vol. xxi. p. 308.

from his childish years. He borrowed his demonology from the Catholic Church, and shared in the popular superstitions, which she not only did not discourage but absolutely fostered. The mining people had strange faiths of their own, in which Luther had his part. "The devil," he said, "often deceives miners into the belief that they see a great mass of ore, where in reality there is nothing."[1] But more than this, Luther's childhood was a time at which the idea of witchcraft had suddenly gathered strength. It was in 1484, the year after he was born, that Innocent VIII issued a bull, which at once took the theory of witchcraft under Papal protection, and handed over the offence to be dealt with by the Inquisition; and this was followed in 1487 by the publication of the famous *Malleus Maleficarum*, of which I have before spoken. Luther never emancipated himself from the opinions of his childhood in this matter; nor did he escape the contagion of the universal madness. He tells a story of the way in which his mother was plagued by a witch, and caps it with many more, in which he manifests a like unquestioning belief. He even thought that he was bewitched himself.[2] He had no pity for such offenders, his only remedy was the fire.

It meant something that Luther, though the grandchild of a peasant, was brought up as a citizen's son. Mansfeld, under the protection of its Counts, whose castle overtopped the town, was one of the places in which men lived a quiet, self-controlled, civic life. There was not indeed that full and varied play of political activity which is to be noted in such free cities as Augsburg and Nürnberg — prosperous communities, able to hold their own against powerful adversaries, and counting for something in the organisation of the Empire. But Mansfeld, too, had its Council, of which in time Hans Luther came to be a member; its mining industry gave it a fair share of wealth; it does not seem to have been vexed with private feud or public war. Its clergy did not pretend to obey the law of celibacy, but at the same time were not guilty of graver offences against the social order. It must be confessed, however, that an ordinance of the magistracy of Mansfeld is

[1] *T. T.* vol. iii. p. 80. *Vide* the whole section xxiv. of the *Table Talk* "Vom Teufel und seinen Werken." [2] *T. T.* vol. iii. pp. 96, 97.

extant which classes the "parsons' maids" with other "public common women," and enjoins upon them to wear their mantles on their heads in the street. A reminiscence of Luther's seems to show the existence of an almost puritanical discipline. "When I was a boy all games were forbidden, so that card-makers, pipers, and actors were not admitted to the sacrament, and those who had played games, or danced, or been present at shows and plays, made it a matter of confession." And there certainly existed in the minds of the burghers—below the surface of pious observance—a distrust of monks and priests, which found expression in common rhymes and proverbial sayings. One will serve as a sample:—

"Wer will haben rein sein Haus,
Der behalt Pfaffen und Mönche draus." [1]

There can be no doubt that Hans Luther shared to a considerable extent in this feeling. He was a thoroughly pious man, acting up to his own ideas of truth and right, but decidedly unwilling to put his conscience into ecclesiastical keeping. It is true that when in 1497 two new altars, dedicated to various saints, were consecrated in the Church of St. George at Mansfeld, and sixty days' indulgence was offered to those who heard mass at them, Hans Luther is named, with some of his colleagues in the magistracy, as having availed himself of the privilege.[2] But this act of official piety is not inconsistent with his usual attitude to the Church. He sternly set his face against his son's becoming a monk, though he appears to have accepted him as a Reformer without difficulty. All Martin Luther's recollections of his father point in the same direction. On one occasion, when he was very ill, and in supposed danger of death, his confessor asked him whether he would not leave something to the Church. "No, his children stood in more need of it." Again, when Count Gunther of Mansfeld died without making any bequests to the Church, Martin, whose mind was already taking an ecclesiastical turn, was astonished

[1] Jürgens, vol. i. p. 136; *T. T.* vol. i. p. 279, vol. ii. p. 407. "Me puero memini sacerdotes non fuisse suspectos de adulterio et fornicatione, tametsi cohabitarent mulierculis, donec postea incestus, adulteria, fornicationes, denique raptus alienarum conjugum impudentissime committerent; adeo crevit nostra memoria petulantia sacrificulorum," Erl. *Opp. Exeg.* vol. ix. p. 260 (*Enarrationes in Genesin*).

[2] Köstlin, *M. L.* vol. i. p. 29.

to find that his father heartily commended the omission. The old man's own death, which took place in 1530, while Luther was at Coburg, waiting for news from the Diet of Augsburg, which he was not permitted to attend, was very characteristic. He had received from his son, not long before, a letter of exhortation and comfort, and the minister in attendance asked him, after the fashion of the day, whether he abode by the faith which it set before him. "Yea, if I did not, I should act like a rogue," was all his answer. Evidently there was much of rugged simplicity, of strong sense, of sturdy moral steadfastness in the man.[1]

Men who looked back from a time when their minds had free access to all sources of Christian instruction to a youth trained under Catholic influences, were apt to exaggerate the darkness from which they had emerged. Mathesius, for instance, says that he never remembered in his youth—he was a Catholic till he was twenty-five—hearing from the pulpit anything about the Commandments, the Creed, the Paternoster, or Baptism.[2] Legends of the saints in plenty he had read, but he recollected neither written nor printed expositions of the faith for the use of children. Luther seems to have looked at his childish days with a kinder and perhaps a more accurate eye. "I was baptized," he says, "in the house of the Pope, I was catechised, I learned the Scriptures." He mentions with hearty commendation the "fine hymns" that were sung, enumerating those peculiar to different seasons of the Church's year, and only complaining that "there were no preachers to tell us what they all meant." The pictures in the churches had his life-long approval, he valued them for their suggestiveness to the young and ignorant, and brushed aside the hint that they encouraged idolatry. So, too, with the childish plays which were acted: all school amusements naturally took a religious shape. Still, while recalling these things with pleasure, and acknowledging his obligations to them, he confesses that the impression of Christ left upon him from his childhood was a terrifying one, and goes on to say that the

[1] Erl. D.S. vol. xliv. p. 235 (*Predigten ueber etzliche Kapitel des Ev. Matthäi*); Ratzeberger, p. 42; De W. vol. iii. p. 550; *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 168.

[2] Mathesius, p. 63 B.

natural result was a recourse to Mary and her saints. The truth seems to be, that while the Church made a constant appeal to the soul through the senses, there was little attempt to reach and inform the mind. But there is no evidence to show that Luther, quick-witted as he was, felt this at the time. It was the judgment which his maturer passed upon his childish years.[1]

In 1497, Luther, when in his fourteenth year, was sent to school at Magdeburg, in company of John Reinecke, a comrade whose friendship lasted through life. He says himself that he went to the school of the "Nullbrüder." The phrase is a quite unusual one, and no one knows certainly who they were. The latest and probably the best-grounded opinion identifies them with the Brethren of the Common Life, who had at that time a settlement at Magdeburg, and who made teaching one of their regular occupations. If this is so, a link of singular interest is established between Luther and the order which was founded by Gerhard Groot, and illustrated by the name of Thomas à Kempis. Magdeburg must have produced a considerable impression upon the boy's mind. It was the first large town that he had seen. The change from such places as Mansfeld and Eisleben to a cathedral city of 40,000 inhabitants cannot but have been great. Magdeburg was a commercial city, one of the Hanse towns, with trade and manufactures, just then flourishing in great prosperity. But it was also an ecclesiastical place, subject, under the Emperor, to the Archbishop only. That prelate was Ernest of Saxony, the brother of the Elector Frederick, who was afterwards to exercise so large an influence on Luther's fate. Chosen to fill the See at the age of twelve, he held it from 1476 to 1513. He was a man who, as might be expected from his high birth, loved show, and magnified his office as a Prince Bishop; but he was earnest in the performance of his duties, a friend of learned men, kind to the poor, just and merciful as a ruler, and anxious to raise the standard of morality among his clergy. It is not unreasonable to conjecture that Magdeburg, under such an Arch-

[1] Erl. *Opp. Exeg.* vol. xviii. p. 230 (*Enarrationes Psalmorum*); D. S. vol. xxiv. p. 375 (*Vermahnung an die Geistlichen, versammlet auf dem Reichstag zu Augsburg*); *ibid.* vol. v. p. 23 (*Hauspostille*); *ibid.* vol. vi. p. 241 (*Hauspostille*).

bishop, and with the pomp and circumstance of its cathedral services, may have presented the Church and her demands in a favourable light to Luther's mind.

What we know of his life during the single year that he spent at Magdeburg can be told in very few words. He was a poor scholar, and as such sang and begged "panem propter Deum" from door to door. He had done it at Mansfeld. There is a story which he often told in later life, of a peasant at whose door he and some other lads were singing, who frightened them away by his gruff voice, though all the while he had sausages in his hand which he intended to give them. He was no worse off than others of his class, nor ashamed of belonging to it. Mathesius, his first biographer, who knew him well, says that this kind of mendicancy was practised by the children of "honourable and well-to-do people." At the same time he was not without friends; in a letter written in 1522 to Claus Storm, Burgomaster of Magdeburg, he speaks of having seen him at the house of Dr. Paul Mosshauer. Here, too, it is possible that he met Wenceslaus Link, who followed him into the Augustinian order, then to Wittenberg, and finally into rebellion against the Papacy. Beyond this, two anecdotes of the year at Magdeburg fill up the scanty canvas. One, told by the physician Ratzeberger, is that Luther, lying sick of a fever, and left alone in the house, crept on hands and feet to where a great jug of cold water stood, drank plentifully, went to sleep, and woke convalescent. The other relates to a Prince William of Anhalt Bernburg, who had embraced the monastic life and become a Franciscan. Luther saw him in the streets of Magdeburg, clad in the garments of the order, pale, wasted, bearing about with him the semblance of approaching death, carrying on his shoulders a heavy sack that bowed him to the ground, and collecting alms from door to door. The sight made a deep impression upon the susceptible boy, on whom, possibly, some passing shadow of the cloister was beginning to rest. No more striking example of ecclesiastical holiness could well present itself to him, and of other holiness than the ecclesiastical he had as yet no conception.[1]

[1] De W. vol. i. p. 390, vol. ii. p. 212; Melanchthon, *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 157; *T. T.* vol. ii. p. 164; Mathesius, p. 3 A; Jürgens, vol. i. p. 266;

From Magdeburg Luther was sent in 1498 to Eisenach, a pleasant Thuringian town, lying in the shadow of the hills, upon which, almost within sight, rises the Wartburg. Here he had kinsfolk on the mother's side, and Möhra, his father's old home, was not far off. There were three parish churches at Eisenach, to each of which a school was attached; it was in that of St. George that Luther was a scholar. Its master was John Trebonius, a man of whom we hear nothing in the general history of the revival of letters in Germany, and who probably, therefore, had not abandoned the old methods of teaching. But that he knew what true education was, a characteristic anecdote survives to tell. He was wont, on entering the school, to walk bareheaded to his seat, out of respect to the latent capacities of his boys, "of some of whom," he said, "God might make rulers, chancellors, doctors, magistrates." It was a Latin school, and the study of that language, as it was then taught, was Luther's chief occupation; in grammar, in the art of writing prose and verse, he easily, according to Melanchthon, surpassed his companions. The poverty at home still continued. The boy, who had a fine alto voice, and seems to have cultivated at an early age the art which he afterwards loved so much, sang from door to door, and received the alms that were given to the poor scholars. But in so doing he attracted the notice and awakened the compassion of a lady, the wife of Conrad Cotta, who took him into her own house, and admitted him to her table. The Cotta house, gray and bent with age, still stands at Eisenach,

Seckendorf, *Commentarius de Lutheranismo*, vol. i. p. 113; Ratzeberger, p. 41; Erl. *Opp. Exeg.* vol. x. p. 259 (*Enarrationes in Genesin*); D.S. vol. xvii. p. 414 (*Vermischte Predigten*); *ibid.* vol. xxxi. p. 239 (*Verantwortung des aufgelegten Aufruhrs von Herzog Georg*). In his letter to Cardinal Cajetan, 1518 (De W. vol. i. p. 162), Luther speaks of "dulcissimus frater meus, Magister Wenceslaus Lincus, qui ab ineunte aetate pari mecum studio adolevit." The wandering scholars of this age in Germany were a rough and hardy race. They migrated in bands from school to school, sometimes through the length and breadth of the land, suffering much hardship, and often contracting very undesirable habits as they went. The older scholars were called "Bachanten," the younger, who, to borrow a word from a very different system, "fagged" for them, "Schützen." A typical account of this kind of life may be found in the autobiography of Thomas Platter, the son of a peasant in the valley of Visp (1499-1582), who, after roving all over Germany in search of an education, ended his days as city schoolmaster at Basel. Conf. "Thomas und Felix Platter, *Zwei Lebensbilder aus der Zeit der Reformation*. Ed. Heman, 1882."

and pilgrims are invited to view the room in which the choir-boy from Mansfeld slept.[1]

The Cottas were a noble family, originally, it is said, of Italian origin. More than one of them, during the years that followed Luther's schooldays, were Burgomasters of Eisenach. Long afterwards a Henry Cotta studied at Wittenberg, and boarded at the table of Luther, then grown famous. What relation he was to Frau Ursula, who died in 1511, it is not easy to determine with certainty; Luther writes about him, under the date of 1541, to his relatives Frederick and Bonaventura Cotta in Eisenach. But there are other traces of his kindly relations with the family. Frau Cotta's maiden name was Schwalbe, and there was a "Schwalbische Collegium," a corporation of Franciscan monks, founded by St. Elizabeth, and settled on the road between Eisenach and the Wartburg, with the members of which he was on the friendliest terms. One Caspar Schwalbe is mentioned more than once in his letters; of Henry Schwalbe he speaks as "mine host," and as on terms of the closest intimacy with "these Franciscans." It is impossible to estimate too highly the effect upon the rough miner's son of intercourse with a family of gentle birth and good breeding. It was his first glimpse of a social life that had any pretension to being refined. Nor can it be doubted that it made a deep impression upon him. He calls Eisenach "his dear town." In his translation of the Bible he affixes to Proverbs xxxi. 10 the well-known description of a virtuous woman, "Nothing on earth is dearer than woman's love, to whosesoever lot it may fall." "And this," he is reported in the *Table Talk* to have said, "my hostess at Eisenach rightly said, when I went there to school."[2]

[1] De W. vol. i. p. 390; Jürgens, vol. i. p. 273. Luther also speaks of one Wigand as having been his schoolmaster. He may have been a teacher under Trebonius. De W. vol. i. p. 29; vol. iii. p. 112; Seckendorf, vol. i. pp. 20, 21; Ratzeberger, p. 43; Melanchthon, *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. p. 157; Lingke, *Dr. M. Luther's merkwürdige Reisegeschichte*, pp. 6, 7. Luther himself says (Erl. D.S. xvii. p. 414, *Vermischte Predigten*), "Verachte mir nicht die Gesellen, die fur der Thur *panem propter Deum* sagen, und den Brodreigen singen; du hörest grosser Fursten und Herren singen. Ich bin auch ein solcher Partekenhengst gewest, und hab das Brod fur den Häusern genommen, sonderlich zu Eisenach, in meiner lieben Stadt."

[2] De W. vol. vi. p. 290; *Corp. Ref.* vol. xxvii. p. 627; Erl. D.S. vol. lxiv. p. 113 (*Randglossen*); *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 75.

In one sense Eisenach may be supposed to have continued and deepened the impressions of Magdeburg. Besides its three churches it had no fewer than nine convents. The memory of St. Elizabeth, who had inhabited the Wartburg, hung about the place. Whatever we hear of Luther at this period of his life, connects him with the Franciscan order. His earliest extant letter, dated 22d April 1507, is to John Braun, the vicar of St. Mary's Church at Eisenach, and contains a very cordial message to the members of the "Schwalbische Collegium." It is hardly possible to doubt that Frau Cotta was a devout friend and disciple of the order with which her family was so closely connected. Another story of this time points in the same direction. John Hilten, a Franciscan monk of Eisenach, who, breaking through the bonds of conventual orthodoxy, had written against the abuses of Papal power, the neglect of Scripture, and the irreligious lives of monks, was, when Luther was at school there, held in strict durance, and died in prison about 1502. Melanchthon, in his *Apology for the Confession of Augsburg*, long afterwards claimed Hilten as a friend and forerunner of the Reformation, noting that before his death he had prophesied that in 1516 would arise a monk who would destroy monkery. In a note on this passage Luther professes to have heard Henry Schwalbe speak of Hilten with compassion, "as of one that lay bound." But it is not likely that more than a vague rumour of the prisoner would reach the boy's ears, or that he would become acquainted with the prophecy which his friends were willing to think had been fulfilled in himself.[1]

In 1501 Martin Luther, then in his eighteenth year, proceeded to the University of Erfurt, where, at the beginning of the summer semester, he matriculated under the Rectorate of Jodocus Trutvetter of Eisenach. The entry in the matriculation book, "Martinus Ludher ex Mansfeldt," is the first contemporary record of him which survives. At Michaelmas

[1] Jürgens, vol. i. p. 295; De Wette, vol. i. p. 3; *Corp. Ref.* vol. xxvii. p. 627; *T. T.* vol. iii. p. 252. For lives of Hilten *vide* Erhard, *Geschichte des Wiederaufblühens*, etc., vol. iii. p. 455; *M. Adami Vitae Germanorum Theologorum*, p. 3. Another form of Hilten's prophecy given by Ratzeberger, p. 45, is "Sub Leone exoritur Heremita, qui reformabit fidem Romanam." The interpretation, of course, is of Leo X, and Luther, as an Augustinian or Hermit.

1502 he was admitted to the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy, being the thirtieth among fifty-seven candidates; at Epiphany 1505 he became Master, the second among seventeen competitors. The press of poverty at home seems now to have been relaxed, and he was dependent upon his father only for a maintenance.[1]

Convenience of access was probably the chief reason why Erfurt was chosen as the scene of Luther's further studies. The town was happily situated, lying in the midst of a fruitful country, and, serving as an entrepôt of trade between Upper and Lower Germany, it had acquired political importance as a place where Diets and Synods were held. Technically, it belonged to the See of Mainz; a city seal of the twelfth century bore the inscription, "Erfordia est fidelis filia Moguntinae sedis." But the tie was not a very close one. The burghers of Erfurt, balancing themselves between the Archbishop of Mainz, on the one hand, and the Landgrave of Thuringia (to whose rights the Saxon electors had succeeded), on the other, not only developed a prosperous and independent civic life, but claimed for their town the rank of a free Imperial city. In any case, they were practically their own masters, acquired territory, made peace and war on their own account; nor was it till, in the first years of the sixteenth century, they had encumbered themselves with a hopeless load of debt, that the rival claims of Mainz and Saxony again came into play. But in 1501 there were no outward signs of coming embarrassment, and the wealth of Erfurt made a deep impression upon Luther's mind. He often, in after years, contrasted it with sandy and sterile Wittenberg. The amenity of its situation was such that if it were burned down, he thought, another city would immediately arise in its place. He recalled the word of one Sebastian Weinmann, who, preaching at Erfurt a little before his own time, declared that "God tried other cities with scarcity, Erfurt with abundance." Naturally, a part of the wealth of Erfurt had been spent upon ecclesiastical foundations. The town still abounds with churches; in 1501 it had convents of almost every order. Without being a place upon which the seal of religious enthusiasm was deeply impressed, life in

[1] Weissenborn, *Acten*, vol. ii. p. 219; Köstlin, *St. u. Kr.* 1874, p. 319; Erl. D.S. vol. xvii. p. 415 (*Vermischte Predigten*); *ibid.* vol. lxv. p. 257.

Erfurt was marked by a sufficient and willing conformity with ecclesiastical custom. Its old landmarks are now nearly gone. The University buildings are hardly to be distinguished; fire and restoration have almost destroyed the Augustinian convent, though the church in which Luther sang his first mass still stands. But the Gera, a stream which has inspired thousands of indifferent Latin verses, yet wanders through Erfurt in various channels, and from the height of their arched foundations the Cathedral, and by its side the quaintly coupled spires of St. Severin, tower over the spacious market-place.[1]

Here, at the end of the fourteenth century, had been founded a university. The first bull for its establishment was published by Clement VII in 1379, but the new institution was not opened till 1392. Its object was defined by Urban VI as "the praise of the Divine name, the propagation of the Catholic faith, and the exaltation of the Roman Church." The group of German Universities of which Erfurt was the fifth in order of date—Prag, founded in 1348; Vienna in 1365; Heidelberg in 1385; and Köln in 1388—were all essentially Catholic and scholastic in inspiration, and preceded the introduction of the new humanism from Italy into Germany. At the same time, though completely mediæval in their objects and methods, they were a first effect of that gradual reawakening of the human mind which was destined to produce such large results. Erfurt differed from the rest in being a manifestation of civic interest in education; no princely or episcopal patron protected its birth: it was the citizens themselves who applied to the Pope for his necessary sanction to their undertaking. Some signs of this civic character appear in the original statutes. The students were not divided into nations, and had a share in the choice of the Rector. By the side of the Rector was placed a University Council, whose advice he was bound to take. Otherwise, as was inevitable, the constitution of the University was moulded on the religious ideas of the day. But it cannot be doubted that its close connection with the life of a busy and self-governing city had something

[1] Jürgens, vol. i. p. 332; Kampschulte, *Die Universität Erfurt*, vol. i. p. 120 *seq.*; *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 666; *Coll.* vol. ii. pp. 13, 14; vol. iii. pp. 100, 101; *Erfurter-Lutherfest-Almanach*, "*Die Lutherstätte in Erfurt v. R. Scheibe*"; De Wette, vol. iii. p. 228.

to do with making it especially sensitive to the growth and change of general opinion.[1]

I have already, in telling the story of the revival of letters in Germany, alluded to the brilliant band of humanists who from 1500 to 1520 gave Erfurt the first place among German Universities. The line was unbroken, from Luder and Publicius, the first teachers of the new learning, through Maternus Pistoris and Nicholas von Marschalk, to the group of "poets" who acknowledged Mutian as their head, and who, under his anonymous leadership, defended Reuchlin against the monks and Inquisitors of Köln. At the same time, it was only slowly and by degrees that Erfurt had assumed an attitude of opposition to ecclesiastical modes of thought. All through the fifteenth century we find different, if not irreconcilable, tendencies of opinion manifesting themselves by turns. Not long after the establishment of the University there was a great migration of German students from Prag to Erfurt, and the words "Erfordia Praga" grew into a proverb, in which Luther, after he had discovered how nearly his doctrine accorded with that of Hus, found something prophetic. But one of the representatives of Erfurt at the Council of Constanz, John Zachariä, was so active in procuring the condemnation of Hus as to receive from Martin V the gift of the Golden Rose, usually reserved for princes who have deserved well of the Church. Again, a distinguished teacher in Erfurt was John of Wesel, who lectured there about the middle of the century, a Reformer before the Reformation, who, relying on the authority of Scripture, denounced indulgences in seven propositions, not less trenchant than Luther's ninety-five, and died, a condemned heretic, in prison. "I remember," writes Luther, "how M. Johannes Wesalia, who was preacher at Mainz, formerly at Erfurt, ruled the University with his books, out of which I myself proceeded Master." But it is quite clear from what follows that Luther did not know for what heresies Wesel had been condemned, and the books to which he alludes were plainly philosophical or dialectical. Sebastian Weinmann, to whom a passing allusion has already been made, denounced in strong terms, not long before Luther's

[1] Weissenborn, *Acten*, vol. i. p. 1 *seq.*; Kampschulte, vol. i. p. 3 *seq.*

time, the practical abuses of the Church, and prophesied reformation, so that the citizens and students heard him gladly, while on the other hand the clergy and the council joined hands to expel him from the town. But against this may be put the splendid reception which in 1502 was given to the Cardinal Legate Raymond, the preacher of the Jubilee, and the bearer to Germany of Papal indulgences, hitherto unparalleled in largeness and abundance. City and University went forth in state to meet him; sixty horsemen formed his escort, and from the elevation on which the Cathedral stands, he distributed his blessing to the crowds below.[1]

Other similar facts might be enumerated to show that while the leaven of the new learning was working below the surface, the Erfurt to which Luther came was yet an orthodox city, sound in faith and punctual in observance. It was not till after he left it that humanism and mediævalism came into decisive collision, and he found that he belonged to neither camp. The method of new culture, in dealing with old faith, is usually one of silent corrosion; open conflict is postponed to the latest moment; and there are those who return to the accustomed position, rather than face the chances of decisive collision. So the two[2] men from whom Luther probably received the greater part of his theological and philosophical training, Bartholomew Arnoldi von Usingen and Jodocus Trutvetter of Eisenach, appear to have lived on friendly terms with the humanists, who were half-unconsciously their irreconcilable foes. Both were teachers in the philosophical faculty, and both, though tinged with classical learning, remained at the old standpoint of thought. Usingen, perhaps the more

[1] De W. vol. ii. p. 5; Erl. D.S. vol. xxiv. p. 27 (*Von den neuen Eckischen Bullen und Lügen*); Ullmann, *Reformatoren vor der Reformation*, vol. i. p. 202 *seq.*; Erl. D.S. vol. xxv. p. 384 (*Von den Conciliis und Kirchen*, 1539); Jürgens, vol. i. p. 335. The account of Weinmann in the text is Tentzel's (*Hist. Bericht*, vol. i. p. 28, *note*). According to Erhard, vol. iii. p. 462 *seq.*, Weinmann studied in Erfurt from 1475, took his Master's degree in 1482, was Doctor of Theology in 1490, and in 1493 Rector of the University. He attained considerable reputation as preacher at the Cathedral, where Luther may have heard him (1501-1505), was driven from Erfurt in the civic troubles of 1509, retired to Magdeburg, and returned to Erfurt where he died, probably in 1514.

[2] Luther once speaks of another teacher: "meinem institutor Johann Greffenstein, gelehreten und frummen Mann, wilchen ich nu wohl mag nennen, dieweil er todt ist": Erl. D.S. vol. xxiv. p. 28 (*Von den neuen Eckischen Bullen und Lügen*, 1520).

conservative of the two, was an Augustinian, and so, after a time, brought into peculiarly close relations with Luther. His works, especially an exposition of Donatus, though written in a barbarous style, were full of illustrative quotations from Latin authors. Trutvetter best represented the orthodox speculation of the University. He was known, *par excellence*, as the Doctor of Erfurt. Luther calls him the first dialectician of the age. In 1507 he was invited to Wittenberg, where he taught for some years, returning to Erfurt in 1510. He was a Nominalist of the school of Occam, and at the same time a leader of the party who called themselves "moderns," in opposition to the "ancients": men, that is, who were not deterred by respect for old traditions from the attempt to improve existing text-books and to carry forward their science into new fields of thought. His numerous works prove his acquaintance with classical, though chiefly Latin, authors, and the young humanists, with whom he lived on friendly terms, adorned them with commendatory verses. The most characteristic thing that we know of him is that he taught Luther to distinguish between the faith due to the Canonical books of Scripture and the free judgment that might be applied to others. Even so late as May 1518, some months after the publication of the Ninety-five Theses, Luther writes to him in the friendliest terms, if not in the expectation of winning his support, at least hoping to disarm his opposition.[1]

What we know of Luther's student life at Erfurt can be briefly told. Mathesius says of him, "Although he was by nature a lively and cheerful young fellow, he began his learning every morning with hearty prayer and churchgoing; as indeed his motto was, 'Well prayed is more than half studied.' He neither overslept himself nor omitted any lecture, willingly asked questions of his teachers, talked to them respectfully, often went over his work with his companions, and when no public lecture was going on, spent his time in the library of the University." Melanchthon, in the single

[1] De W. vol. i. pp. 107, 127; Kampschulte, vol. i. p. 43 *seq.* For Trutvetter *vide* Dr. Gustav Plitt, *Jodokus Trutvetter von Eisenach*. Scheurl, who was with Trutvetter at Wittenberg, speaks of him as "singulare ornamentum et lumen fulgidum gymnasii nostri," and again as "modernorum princeps." *Briefbuch*, vol. i. pp. 62, 123.

paragraph which he devotes to the subject, assumes a more critical tone. He hints at what Luther's eager mind might have accomplished "if he had found fit teachers." He laments that "he fell at Erfurt into the sufficiently thorny dialectic of that age." "But as his mind, greedy of learning, sought for more and better things, he read for himself most of the works of the old Latin authors, Cicero, Virgil, Livy, and others." These, however, he studied not as boys do, purely from the linguistic side, but with a view of acquiring a practical knowledge of human life. "So did he stand out," continues Melanchthon, "in his ~~youth, that~~ his genius was an object of admiration to the whole University." One other scrap of information completes all we know of his philosophical course. In the train of Cardinal Raymond came to Erfurt a man whose chief claim to remembrance is that he was afterwards one of Luther's strongest opponents, Hieronymus Emser. He remained there for a while to teach, the subject of his lectures being the *Sergius*, a Latin comedy of Reuchlin's. And it was afterwards Emser's boast that he had numbered Luther among his hearers.[1]

Melanchthon's account of Luther's classical studies answers with sufficient accuracy to what we otherwise know of the facts. He learned no Greek at Erfurt, and his knowledge of that language, acquired at a later period, was chiefly confined to the dialect of the New Testament. The only Greek author with whom his works show any familiarity is Aristotle, whom, however, he probably learned to know in mediæval translations and abridgments. On the other hand, he not unfrequently quotes the better known Latin poets and historians. His poetical quotations, however, have nothing recondite about them, and do not indicate a minute acquaintance with the books from which they are taken; they consist rather of such verses as, from their weighty meaning or apt expression, have always been the common property of educated men. For Cicero he had a great admiration, setting him far above Aristotle. The story[2] that when he went into the convent

[1] Mathesius, p. 3 B; *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 157; Jürgens, vol. i. p. 472.

[2] This story is told by Seckendorf, vol. i. p. 21, on the authority of a MS. "Rhapsodiae de dictis et scriptis Lutheri," by Valentinus Bavarus, a citizen of Naumburg, who compiled it shortly after Luther's death. It is preserved in the library at Gotha.

the only books he took with him were Virgil and Plautus, is only partially borne out by ascertained facts. Virgil and Terence he often quotes, but a diligent search has brought to light only one allusion to Plautus. The impression made upon the mind by the carefully collected evidence of Luther's acquaintance with the classics is, that it was the knowledge, not of a well-trained and systematic student, but of a man of quick and vigorous intellect, eager to collect impressions from every side. What Melanchthon says practically amounts to this, that Latin had to Luther neither a philological nor a literary, so much as a human interest. He read Virgil and Cicero for what they had to say, not for the way in which they said it. His own Latin prose—to his few verses no allusion need be made — corresponds with this. It is clear, terse, vigorous, carrying the reader along with its impetuous flow, and putting him fully in possession of its subject matter, but neither elegant in construction nor classical in idiom. Luther scruples neither to make a word when he wants one, nor to break into German where he thinks Latin would be weaker and less vivid. He does not pretend to be a master of style; he writes to such men as Mutian and Erasmus with professions of inferiority in this respect, which were no doubt sincere. Nor is there any sign that he repented of not having applied himself to the niceties of classical culture; what he is sorry for is, that he did not read poetry and history more widely, with a view of enlarging his knowledge of men.[1]

He lived thus on the verge of the humanistic circle, but did not belong to it. Their spirit and object were not his; at the moment when, if he had pursued his legal studies, he might possibly have felt more drawn to them, monastic religion took possession of him, and he emerged from the spiritual conflicts of his cell a theologian for life. One or two friends stood with him in the same relation to the "poets." Lange,[2]

[1] De W. vol. i. p. 84; to Mutian, vol. i. p. 21; to Reuchlin, vol. i. p. 196; to Erasmus, vol. i. p. 247; to Hess, vol. ii. p. 313; Erl. D.S. vol. xxii. p. 191 (*An die Rathsherren allen Städte Deutsches Landes*). Luther writes in 1521 to the Elector Frederick (De W. vol. i. 565), "Non de eloquentia et Latini sermonis elegantia dico. Nam harum rerum ut sum imperitus, ita peritis prorsus non haec laboro." On this subject see O. G. Schmidt, *Luther's Bekanntschaft mit den alten Classikern.*

[2] Lange to Mutian, Tentzel, *Reliquiae Epp. Mutiani*, p. 29: "Is Doctor Martinus est, quocum Erphurdiae perquam familiariter vixi, nec parum auxilii bonis in literis olim mihi attulit."

a good Greek scholar, as Greek scholars then went, afterwards Prior of the Erfurt Augustinians, and George Burkhardt, from his birthplace Spalt, called Spalatin, Elector Frederick's chaplain, and the intermediary between him and Luther. Mutian and Hess, the two most distinguished of the humanists, Luther did not know till his own Erfurt days were passed. The single friend who belonged to the inner circle of the poets was Johann Jäger, better known as Crotus Rubianus, a man associated with Ulrich von Hutten through the whole of his brief and stormy life, and now identified as the chief author of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum*, as we saw. But this intimacy seems to have been suspended, till about 1518-1520 a temporary alliance was formed between Luther and that section of the humanists who, on patriotic grounds, were filled with anti-Roman rage.[1] Luther was no true humanist at heart. He cared for learning, partly for practical, still more for theological, purposes. One cannot conceive of him as sitting down to file and polish Latin verses into a passable imitation of Ovid. He wrote, not to show how well he could write, but because there was that within him which imperatively demanded utterance.

But the principal part of the general training which each student of the University went through before applying himself to the special studies of a faculty was philosophical. Logic, dialectic, rhetoric, the nature of ideas, the classification of conceptions, the rules of persuasive speech, these—followed by some rude explanations of physical phenomena, resting not on observation and experiment, but on the authority of Aristotle and his commentators—were the chief constituents of this method of education. Such as it was, it lay under the grave disadvantage of being, in Luther's time, in a state of decay. The great days of the Scholastic Philosophy, when some of the world's keenest intellects applied themselves to the task of welding philosophy and religion into an indivisible whole, were long past. Even within the old confining limits no new developments took place. The well-worn road of definition and distinction was trodden with monotonous and depressing fidelity. Philosophy at Erfurt was Nominalist; one of the last great scholastics, Gabriel Biel, a disciple of Occam, had taught there, and

[1] Crotus to Luther, 16th Oct. 1519: *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. i. p. 309.

Luther professed himself Occamist and Nominalist to the end of his life. Such as the instruction was, he entered into it heartily, and made it his own. He thought highly of the public disputations, which formed an important part of this training; they taught men what they knew, and what their powers were. But the whole system was open to the objection of dealing with words more than thoughts, and with thoughts more than things. Accuracy of definition, subtlety of distinction, readiness of disputation are of comparatively little avail if the mind be scantily provided with matter on which to work. Andreas Proles, the provincial vicar of the Augustinian congregation, who preceded Staupitz in that office, aptly compared the scholastic system of education, and especially the disputations, to "a man who should sit down to whet an axe, and should whet and whet it continually, but never use it to hew anything down." [1]

Of incident in Luther's life during these student years but little has been preserved. Once, on a journey to Mansfeld, he is said to have pierced an artery, either in the thigh or the foot. The wound, which had been bound up, broke out again the following night, and on both occasions of danger he is said, not unnaturally, to have invoked the aid of the Virgin. One account, given in the *Table Talk*, says that he used the period of convalescence to teach himself to play upon the lute. Music, indeed, was one of his recreations from a very early date. He himself recommends music and fencing as an antidote to dangerous amusements; Crotus writes to him in 1500, "Thou wast formerly in our companionship both musician and learned philosopher." One incident engraved itself deeply on his memory. A nameless friend, whom he was consoling for the loss of his son, told him that some day he would become a great man. If, as another account states, this happened at a moment of severe physical depression, it will sufficiently explain his word, "I have very often recollected this saying; for, as I have said, such voices as these have something of divination and oracle in them." For the

[1] Jürgens, vol. i. pp. 358, 395, 421; *T. T.* vol. iv. pp. 385, 560; *Coll.* vol. ii. pp. 142, 144; Erl. *Opp.*, var. arg., vol. v. p. 520 (*Confutatio rationis Latomianae*); *ibid.* D.S. vol. xxi. p. 345 (*An den christlichen Adel Deutscher Nation*).

rest, he was proud of his University. In comparison with it he thought all others but boys' schools (*Schützschulen*). In after years he lamented its decay. "What majesty and splendour there was," he said, "when masters were admitted to their degrees with torch processions and all honour. I hold that no temporal, no worldly rejoicing was ever like it. And what pomp and show there was when doctors were made, when they rode round the city with special garments and ornaments, all of which is gone and fallen into disuse. But I would that it were still observed."[1]

It is at this point that a story must be told, which, more than any other incident in Luther's early life, has excited almost fierce controversy. Mathesius, after having alluded to the time which Luther was wont to spend in the University library, says,[2] "Once, as he was looking at the books, one after another, in order that he might learn to know the good ones, he came upon the Latin Bible, which he had never before seen in his life, and there remarked with great astonishment that there was in it much more text, more epistles and gospels than were expounded in the ordinary homilies, and from the pulpits of the churches. And as he looks about him in the Old Testament, he comes upon the story of Samuel and his mother Hannah, which he quickly reads through with hearty delight and joy; and because all this was new to him, he begins from the bottom of his heart to wish that our faithful God would at some time or other give him also such a book of his own, a wish and sigh which was richly fulfilled." This story is confirmed by Luther himself. He is reported in the *Table Talk* to have said, "Thirty years ago Bibles were unknown. Nobody named the Prophets, and they were thought impossible to understand. When I was twenty years old I had never seen a Bible. I thought that there were no Gospels or Epistles, save such as were in the lessons. At last I found a Bible in the

[1] Lingke, *Reisegesch.* p. 11; *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 170; *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 595; *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. i. p. 340; De W. vol. iv. p. 188; Mathesius, p. 4 A; *T. T.* vol. iv. pp. 544, 545.

[2] Mathesius, p. 3 B. The story is now traced back to Lauterbach's *Tagebuch*, a diary of Luther's conversation. He dates it 22d Feb. 1538 (Lauterbach, p. 36). An illustrative passage is found in the Latin *Table Talk* (*Coll.* vol. ii. p. 240), "Magnae fuerunt tenebrae, et D. Carolostat promotus est in Doctorem qui nunquam vidit (v. r. viderat) Bibliam, et ego solus in monasterio Erphordiae legi Bibliam."

library, and often read it, to the very great astonishment of Dr. Staupitz." In further corroboration may be quoted what Mathesius says of himself: "I have in my youth seen an ungerman German Bible, without doubt translated from the Latin; it was dark and obscure. For at that time learned men set almost no store by the Bible. My father had a German book of homilies (*Postille*) in which, besides the Sunday's Gospels, some passages of the Old Testament were expounded; out of it I have often read to him with pleasure. 'How gladly,' said my father, 'should I see a complete German Bible!'"[1]

Against these positive statements has been set the improbability of the case. The first printed book was the Latin Bible, and between its issue and the year 1500 there were no fewer than ninety-seven editions. Of German Bibles, prior to 1518, there are fourteen, without reckoning others in Low German dialects. In the remains of the University library, still preserved at Erfurt, there are two Latin Bibles, either of which may, from its date, be the one which, if this story be true, Luther read. But there also still exists there the library of the Amplonian College, a corporation within the University founded in 1412, which is curiously interesting as a collection of books formed for the use of students before the invention of the art of printing. According to the statutes of the College, the study of theology is to begin with the Bible; men are to endeavour to understand it in the literal and in the moral sense, with help of Nicholas De Lyra's commentary. And half the theological books of the Amplonian library are exegetical. Couple with this the fact that, however overlaid with tradition, however postponed to patristic commentary, the Bible indisputably lay at the basis of all theological instruction and speculation, and it may well be asked whether the story, which has played so great a part in controversy between Protestants and Catholics, is not inherently incredible.[2]

At the same time the positive testimony to its truth is clear and explicit, and cannot be justly invalidated by any

[1] *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 270; *T. T.* vol. iii. p. 229; Mathesius, p. 160 A.

[2] Herzog, *Real-Encyklopädie*, 1st ed. vol. xvii. p. 438; 2d ed. p. 543 *sq.*; W. Grimm, *Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Lutherischen Bibelübersetzung*, p. 2; Weissenborn, *Amplonius Ratingk de Berka, und seine Stiftung*, p. 22.

presumption of improbability. From the early currency of the story, and the precise and unvarying form in which it is told, we may conclude that it was often in Luther's mouth. And it must be recollected that Mathesius puts the incident at a time when he was not yet a student of theology. He was going through the general philosophical training for the study of a profession, which in his case was to be that of the law. I cannot but think it natural enough that, however busily occupied on the Biblical text theologians and theological students might be, the Bible should not have fallen into the hands of a young layman who had no outlook towards the Church. Two other utterances of Luther's seem to me to weigh heavily on this side. In 1527 he addresses a preface to a book by Justus Menius, then pastor in Erfurt, "to all pious Christians" in that city. "You have had," he says, "for many years a University in your city, of which I was for some years a member, but I can well swear that all through that time not a single right Christian reading or preaching was given by any one—of which you now have every corner full. Oh how happy should I then have thought myself, if once I could have heard a Gospel, yea, a Psalm, and now you have the whole Scripture, clear to be heard. How dear, and deeply buried, lay then the Scripture, although we were so right hungry and thirsty after it, and there was no one to give us anything. And yet there was so much trouble, cost, danger, toil, spent upon it!" While what the defenders of the old theology thought of the matter, is plain from the anecdote following: "Dr. Usingen, an Augustinian monk, who was my teacher in the convent at Erfurt, once said to me, when he saw that I valued the Bible so highly, and willingly read the Scriptures, 'Eh, Brother Martin, what is the Bible? You should read the old teachers; they have sucked the juice of truth out of the Bible; the Bible is the cause of all uproar.'" On the whole, perhaps, the story is not quite as incredible as it has been represented to be.[1]

The possession of a Master's degree gave Luther the right of lecturing in philosophy, though there is no positive evidence

[1] De W. vol. iii. p. 228; *T. T.* vol. i. p. 29; Conf. Erl. D.S. vol. xxiv. p. 375 (*Vermahnung an die Geistlichen zu Augsburg*).

that he ever exercised it. On the contrary, he seems to have applied himself diligently to the study of jurisprudence, probably under the direction of Henning Göde, a distinguished lawyer, who was afterwards one of the earliest ornaments of the University of Wittenberg. His father's plan for him was that he should become a lawyer, and, if possible, secure his social position by a rich and honourable marriage. We know that he was, with this purpose in view, in possession of a *Corpus Juris*, which was then a costly book; and he had read something of Accursius, a jurist, whose commentary was frequently bound up with it. But his legal studies, which cannot have been long pursued, came to a sudden end. On St. Alexius' Day, 17th July 1505,[1] he presented himself at the gate of the Augustinian Convent at Erfurt, begging for admittance as a novice. It was a turning-point, not only in his own life, but in the history of European Christianity.[2]

The external circumstances of the change are certified to us by contemporary testimony, and may be disengaged without difficulty from some slight accretions of tradition, which have gathered about them. Luther, possibly to avoid an epidemic which had been devastating Erfurt, had been on a visit to his parents, when, on his return, near the village of Stotterheim, he was overtaken by a violent thunderstorm. Believing himself to be in imminent danger, he cried out, "Help, dear St. Anna, I will become a monk!" The story that a young friend was killed by lightning at his side has no foundation; on the other hand, both Melanchthon and Mathesius record that some close companion had not long before met with a violent death. He himself says that he repented of his vow, though he clave to it. A fortnight afterwards he invited his most intimate friends to his lodgings, took part with them for the last time in the music which he loved, and asked for their escort to the monastery. Then, saying good-bye to them with the words "To-day ye see me, but never again," he left them in tears. "I never thought," he continues, "to come out of the convent; I was clean dead to the world, until God deemed

[1] The *Colloquia* (vol. iii. p. 187) seem to give the 16th of July as St. Alexius' Day. I find it, however, allotted in the Roman Breviary to the 17th.

[2] *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 185; Erl. *Opp. Lat.* vol. xi. p. 169 (*Enarrationes in Genesin*).

that the time had come, and Tetzel with his indulgences drove me." His father, who, as we have seen, was not ecclesiastically inclined, and whose plans for his son were thus suddenly frustrated, was gravely displeased. Hans Luther had been accustomed to address his son, from the date of his Master's degree, with the ceremonious and honourable "you"; now he reverted to the sterner and less respectful "thou." Nor was his anger quite laid to rest till the Monk became the Reformer.[1]

The inner history of this change is far less easy to narrate. We have no direct contemporary evidence on which to rely; while Luther's own reminiscences, on which we chiefly depend, are necessarily coloured by his later experiences and feelings. Of one thing we may be sure, that if the change of purpose culminated in a moment of sudden and sharp crisis, that crisis had been long prepared by slowly-working causes. The unecclesiastical tone of Hans Luther's house cannot have affected his son to any great extent. From an early age he had been little at home. All the influences of his education had been more or less directly religious. At Magdeburg, at Eisenach, at Erfurt, his teachers had been priests, and he had breathed the atmosphere of the Church. We may infer from the deep impression made upon him by the severity of his parents that the house at Mansfeld rather repelled than attracted him; in one place he even gives their hardness, which at the same time he qualifies as "well meant," as one of the forces that drove him into the cloister. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that he took, till long afterwards, any but the ordinary Catholic view of life. And according to that, through the monastery was the only way to peace, to such perfectness as can be attained upon earth, to sure reconciliation with God. Whoever elected to remain in the world voluntarily confronted a thousand dangers, and could not expect to go far on the way of sanctity. The coarse license of the students' life may

[1] *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 188. Luther's conversion was soon and inevitably compared with that of Paul. Crotus Rubianus writes to him in 1519 (*Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. i. p. 311), "Nam ista facio, non sine numine divum; ad haec respexit divina providentia, quando te redeuntem a parentibus coeleste fulmen veluti alterum Paulum ante oppidum Erffurdianum in terram prostravit atque intra Augustiniana septa compulit e nostro consorcio, tristissimo tuo discessu."

well have revolted him. "Erfurt," he said, in after years, "had been nothing better than a brothel and beer-house." When once the inextinguishable thirst for holiness was awakened in any soul, it had no possible recourse except to the life of the monk, guarded from temptation, ordered by discipline, consciously and wholly devoted to self-purification.[1]

Under the surface of "the active and cheerful young fellow," who loved music and bodily exercises, and poured all the energy of a strong and vivid nature into the life of the place, lay a deep and copious spring of religious passion. We must recollect that we have to do with one of the brightest and strongest spirits of which the history of religion makes mention; and that the Luther of the Diet of Worms lay undeveloped in the choir-boy of Eisenach, the student of Erfurt. And his spiritual struggles began early. The "Anfechtungen," the temptations, the conflicts, the despairs, which play so large a part in his life, and, to the last, never left him, were facts of his earlier years also. They were not temptations of the flesh, incident to a hot youth; they were concerned with the terrors of the divine wrath, and the abandonment of the soul by God Now, or a little later, wholly unnerved and occupied by a single thought or passion, he fell into something like trances. Naturally his distress took the form of the fear of divine judgment: the pure desire for holiness, the horror of sin for sin's sake, is not the first trouble of the saint, but his final achievement, and when it comes, breathes peace rather than inspires terror. But to Luther the Father retreated behind the Son: and the Son was an awful figure, sitting upon the rainbow to judge the earth, and moved to compassion, if at all, by the tender pleadings of His mother. And how to placate the judge? How conjure away the cloud of divine anger that overhung and darkened his life? "Oh, when wilt thou, only once, be pious, and do enough to get for thyself a gracious God?" This and such as this, he says, were the thoughts that drove him into monkery. Fastings and prayers, rigid self-discipline, all mortifications of the flesh, a complete self-abandonment to wise and pious direction, were the only method of perfectness which he knew; and it lay hidden in his soul

[1] *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 129; *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 101.

to try it. Then, at the moment when his own physical weakness, the violent death of his comrade, the plague that had raged or was still raging at Erfurt, had brought out all these thoughts into strong relief, came the thunderstorm at Stotterheim. It is very possible that he stood in no real danger; "nothing," he said long afterwards, "is more unquiet and harder to lay to rest than a fearful heart, which grows pale at every thunderclap, yea, even at the rustling of a leaf." But at this instant of terror he took a resolution which he did not dare to break. He exchanged the *Corpus Juris* for the Bible, and, turning his back upon the honourable profession and wealthy marriage of which his father dreamed, entered upon the way of perfectness.[1]

The order into which Luther thus entered was founded in the first half of the thirteenth century.[2] At that epoch Innocent IV and his successor Alexander IV drew together certain scattered monastic communities of Italy, and formed them into a single order, bearing the name and obeying the rule of Augustine. Some of these communities pretended to trace their origin to the great Bishop of Hippo himself, and to find their rule in his writings; but we are here upon traditional rather than historical ground. The monastic life is as old as St. Augustine, and the rule that bears his name has so little that is distinctive in it as to have been adopted by more orders than one. At the same time, the Augustinian order cannot be said to have had a history till its various elements were welded by Innocent IV into a whole. The result was to add another brigade to that Papal army of which the Dominicans and the Franciscans were already the right

[1] Erl. *Comment. in Ep. ad Galatas*, vol. i. p. 260; D. S. vol. xix. p. 152 (*Vermischte Predigten*); *ibid.* vol. xxiv. p. 375 (*Vermahnung an die Geistlichen zu Augsburg*); *ibid.* vol. xl. p. 164 (*Auslegung des* 110 *Psalms*); *ibid.* vol. xliv. p. 72 (*Predigten ueber etzliche Kapitel des Ev. Matth.*); *ibid. Opp. Lat.* vol. x. p. 180 (*Enarrationes in Genesin*). For the story of Luther's conversion, *vide* Melanchthon, *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 158; Ratzeberger, p. 45; Mathesius, p. 4 B. His own account will be found in the letter to his father (1521), which formed the preface to his book on monastic vows: in German, De W. vol. ii. p. 100; in Latin, and more authentic, De W. vol. vi. p. 25. Conf. *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 187; Tentzel, vol. i. p. 146, *note*.

[2] For the history of the German Augustinians and the life of Staupitz, *vide* Kolde, *Die Deutsche Augustiner-Congregation und Johann von Staupitz*. They were Augustinian hermits, and not to be confounded with the Augustinian Canons.

and left wings. The "Hermits," as they loved to call themselves, who had hitherto lived in independence of mutual or any other control, were formed into an order, organised on a European basis, divided into provinces, given a distinctive dress, subjected to a common rule, endowed with peculiar privileges. They were a preaching order, as the remains of some of their churches still bear witness. They were mendicants, and followed the example of other monastic beggars in soon amassing property. The double right of hearing confessions and of burying the dead in their churches placed them in a position of independence as regards the parochial clergy. At a very early period they directed their attention to the Universities, and, in 1261, one of their number already occupied a professor's chair at Paris. There was a close connection at Tübingen between the Augustinian convent and the infant University. We shall see presently that the University of Wittenberg, in its first years, was almost wholly under Augustinian direction. In each province one monastery was a *studium generale*, a college in which theology was taught by competent professors with the assistance of a library: for Thuringia and Saxony, for instance, at Magdeburg and Erfurt. But the Augustinian Order neither has the individuality nor rises to the historical importance of the Dominican or the Franciscan. Its great apostate is its chief illustration.

The name of Augustine has given rise to the idea that some tradition of Augustinian doctrine, such as was afterwards preached by Luther, may have survived in the order that bore it. The name of Andreas Proles, who held a very prominent position in the order throughout the latter half of the fifteenth century, has been cited as that of a forerunner of the Reformer; tradition brings them together in Magdeburg, and asserts that Proles predicted a fall of the Papacy, which he was himself too old to see. But there can hardly have been anything in common between the dignified churchman and the choir-boy who was receiving a charitable education, while the alleged prophecy rests upon late and untrustworthy testimony. It is a well-authenticated fact that Proles condemned the action of his brother Augustinian, John Zachariä, at the

Council of Constanz,[1] but his protest seems to have been much more in the interests of fair play than in those of free theological thought. And the activity of Proles as a reformer was practical, not doctrinal. Like every other monastic order, the Augustinian had its recurring periods of laxity, out of which successive Reformers strove to recall it. In Germany, and in part in Italy too, this drew after it a breach in the organisation of the order. Convents, called of "the Observance," in which the desire for a stricter obedience to the rule had manifested itself, banded themselves together, and slowly, and amid many obstacles, coalesced into a Congregation, an order within an order, withdrawn from the Provincial jurisdiction, and subject to a Vicar, elected by themselves, who, in his turn, was responsible only to the General. It would be impossible to tell in this place how Proles, with the help of Duke William of Saxony, thus established on a firm basis the German or Saxon Congregation of Observant Augustinians, over which he presided as Vicar from 1461 to 1503. We need only note that it was to this severer branch of the order that the convent at Erfurt belonged. At the same time, the whole order was at once of unimpeachable orthodoxy and thoroughly loyal to the Papacy. It was a common boast that till Luther arose, it had never incurred a suspicion of heresy. In the matter of indulgences, in particular, it stood upon the common ground of the Church, as the works of John von Paltz, who graduated at Erfurt in 1483, and afterwards taught in the Augustinian convent there, remain to testify. He not only preached the Jubilee Indulgence of 1500, under Cardinal Raymond, but developed his theory in popular books, both Latin and German, which had a large circulation.[2]

No distinction was at first made between the brilliant young Master of Arts and the other novices. He exchanged his baptismal name for that of Augustine.[3] He was compelled

[1] This tradition came through Staupitz to Luther. De W. vol. ii. p. 493. Conf. Erl. D.S. vol. xxiv. p. 27 (*Von den neuen Eckischen Bullen und Lügen*); *ibid.* vol. lxiv. p. 80 (*Nachlese*).

[2] *Vide* antea, p. 60.

[3] He does not seem to have heartily approved the change: "Ego in baptismo nominatus sum Martinus, postea in monasterio Augustinus. Quid possit fieri turpius aut magis sacrilegum quam abjicere nomen baptismi propter indutum cucullum." Erl. *Opp. Lat.* vol. ix. p. 9 (*Enarrationes in Genesin*). In his extant correspondence, which

to share the common labours of the monastery; he scrubbed and swept with the rest, and when his turn came, took his bag upon his back, and perambulated Erfurt and the villages round about, collecting alms.[1] There was no disposition on the part of the older monks to excuse him from any of the labours which they had themselves gone through. He was put under the care of the Master of the Novices, of whom he speaks with much respect as "a really excellent man, and, without doubt, under the damned cowl, a true Christian," but whose name we do not know. All that is recorded of his intercourse with his pupil may be told in very few words. He placed in Luther's hands, during the year of his novitiate, a MS. of *Athanasius de Trinitate*, which he had himself copied. He gave him instructions how and when to speak to women. On one occasion when Luther was in deep distress of spirit, he said to him, in words which made a profound and lasting impression on his mind, "Do you not know that the Lord has *commanded* us to hope?" But the influence of this nameless teacher was not that which most powerfully turned the current of the young man's life. Presently the convent was visited in its turn by the Vicar, John von Staupitz. Whether he had heard of Luther before, or whether now for the first time he remarked the bright-eyed novice and asked his history, we do not know. At all events, with the discernment of a true leader of men, he at once perceived his promise, and saw the way to draw it out. He asked the Prior Winand von Diedenhofen to relieve Luther from his servile labours and to send him back to his studies. It was characteristic of Staupitz that in the new constitutions which he had given to the Congregation in 1504, the study of the Scriptures was prescribed. He now enforced his regulation in Luther's case, bidding him lay the Bible at the base of his theological studies, and to become, in the language of the day, a good "textualis et

begins with the year 1507, there are only two letters signed Augustinus. And as these have also Martinus Lutherus, it is a question whether, even here, we ought not to read Augustinianus.

[1] The Augustinians, like other orders, had a series of country stations, often covering the whole ground between one convent and another, whither, at stated intervals, the monks proceeded to perform religious offices, and to collect alms. This, in the language of the monastery, was called "terminiren." Kolde, *Aug. Cong.* p. 47; *T. T.* vol. iii. p. 336; *Coll.* vol. i. p. 122.

localis." The monks gave him a Bible, bound, we are told, in red leather, and he eagerly followed the Vicar's counsel. He impressed the Biblical phrases on his memory; he learned on what page, and in what connection each stood; often he meditated a whole day on a single saying. Perhaps the fact that at this time "he did not think much of *De Lyra*," indicates that the impression made upon him by the text was so deep and vivid as to obscure the comment. But he was alone in his devotion to the Scriptures. "I only," he said long afterwards, "read the Bible in the monastery at Erfurt."[1]

The name of Staupitz is that which is chiefly associated with Luther's during what may be called his transition period; and, before going farther, it will be necessary to dwell for a little while on his history and character. He was a man of gentle birth and noble presence, a member of an ancient family settled in the neighbourhood of Meissen, highly esteemed at the courts of the Saxon princes, and one of Frederick's chief advisers in the foundation of the University of Wittenberg. We first hear of him in 1497, when, already Master of Arts and Reader in Theology, he entered the Augustinian convent at Tübingen, of which he was soon elected Prior. At Tübingen he took his theological degrees, proceeding Doctor of Holy Scripture in July 1500. Hence he was soon transferred to Munich, where he again occupied the position of Prior, until in 1503 he removed to Wittenberg, where he took a professorship in the infant University, and was the first Dean of the Theological Faculty.[2] In the same year followed his election as Vicar of the Augustinian Congregation, in succession to Andreas Proles, a capacity in which he procured an entire revision of its statutes. It was as visitor of the convents within his Province that he first fell in with Luther, whose striking personality must in some way have attracted his notice. But from this time he never lost sight of him. It was Staupitz who procured him liberty of study, who was his guide through the spiritual darkness in which he soon became involved, who

[1] Ratzeberger, pp. 47, 48; *Val. Bav. apud Seckendorf*, vol. i. p. 21; *Coll.* vol. ii. pp. 1, 240; *T. T.* vol. ii. p. 291; De W. vol. iv. p. 427. Conf. Lauterbach, *Tagebuch*, pp. 84, 197; Erl. *Opp. Lat.* vol. iv. p. 112 (*Enarr. in Genesin*); *ibid.* vol. xix. p. 100 (*Enarr. Ps.* li.); Kolde, *Aug. Cong.* p. 224.

[2] Förstemann, *Album Acad. Viteberg.* p. i.

called him to Wittenberg to take part in the teaching of the University. But the precise history of their intellectual relations is not easy to trace. At first, no doubt, the influence was all in one direction. The novice, the peasant's son, must have looked up with unfeigned reverence to the stately churchman, whose noble birth enhanced the dignity of his high office. But, with one unimportant and doubtful exception, Staupitz wrote nothing till 1515;[1] and as by that time the force of genius had asserted itself in opposition to inequality of station, it is unsafe to assume that what he was then he had been when he first took Luther by the hand. All seems to show that he was one of those evangelical souls which may be born and grow within, as well as beyond, the Catholic Pale, a nature on which the corruptions and the formalities of the Church alike sat lightly, but which was apt to penetrate beneath them into the secret places of faith. Though hardly to be reckoned among the Mystics, or claiming a place in their succession, he had a side of relation to them; the essence of religious affection and aspiration was nearer to him than the form; while under any form he was quick to detect the essence. It is thus that we can best explain the fact that though never giving up his friendly intercourse with Luther, he did not follow him into open opposition. In 1522, after a painful period of indecision, he transferred himself from the Augustinian to the Benedictine Order, and died, two years after, Abbot of the Monastery of St. Peter at Salzburg. It need hardly be said that a friendship between two such men, under such circumstances, was subject to many strains, and it is to the credit of both that the strand never wholly parted. To Luther his old teacher is always "my dear Dr. Staupitz." He constantly and fully acknowledges his great obligations to him. As late as 1542 he writes of temptations "in which I also was fast held, and in which, if Dr. Staupitz—or much rather, God through Dr. Staupitz's means—had not helped me out, I should have been drowned, and in hell, long ago." In 1529 he requests the visitors of the Saxon Church to secure to Magdalena Staupitz, who had been a nun at Nimptsch, a

[1] In 1868 Knaake commenced the publication of a collected edition of Staupitz's works, but it has so far got only to one small volume.

cottage belonging to the convent at Grimma, for her life, "in token of honour and gratitude to her brother, Dr. John Staupitz;" and in 1531 he appeals on behalf of the same lady to the Elector John. And in an affecting letter written by Staupitz to Luther, only a few months before his own death, and as the superscription bears "post longa silentia," he says, "My most constant love to thee, a love passing the love of women, is always unbroken."[1]

Luther's reading, however, was not confined to the Bible. As I have already mentioned, the monastery at Erfurt was a "studium generale" of the order, in which theology and philosophy were carefully taught, and there was an active intellectual life. Usingen, one of the foremost representatives of scholastic theology at Erfurt, was, as we have seen, one of the brotherhood. John Nathin and John von Paltz were professors of Holy Scripture. Melanchthon mentions Augustine as one of the authors whom Luther chiefly studied about this time. "At the same time," he says, "he did not abandon the scholastics. Gabriel (Biel) and Cameracensis (Peter d'Ailly) he could repeat by heart, almost word for word. He read much and long the writings of Occam.[2] His acumen he preferred to Thomas (Aquinas) and Scotus. He also read Gerson diligently." Traces of these and similar studies are to be found not unfrequently in his writings. In a conversation on the merits of the scholastics which he had with Amsdorf in 1538 he says, "I still keep the books which then tormented me." Nor was this strong phrase idly used. In his peculiar trouble these books not only gave him no help, but brought his difficulties more vividly home to him. When he read Gabriel Biel on the Canon of the Mass, "his heart bled." Bonaventura, with his speculative theology, "all but drove him

[1] De W. vol. v. p. 513; vol. ii. p. 408; vol. vi. p. 101. Conf. vol. iii. p. 470. Burkhardt, *Briefwechsel Luther's*, p. 195; Kolde, *Aug. Cong.* p. 446. In 1545, the year before Luther's death, one Margaretha Staupitz, who signs herself "a forsaken widow," appeals to him as "her especial good friend," and the result was a letter next day to the Elector John Frederick, recommending her case. It contains the following characteristic passage: "As she thus so highly exhorts me, for Dr. Staupitz's sake, whom (if I would not be a damned ungrateful Papal ass) I must praise as having been at first my father in this doctrine, and as having borne me in Christ," etc. Burkhardt, pp. 464, 465.

[2] "Vuilhelmus Occam, Scholasticorum doctorum sine dubio princeps et ingeniosissimus:" Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. iv. p. 188 (*Responsio Lutheriana ad condemnationem*, etc.)

mad." On the other hand, he thought that St. Bernard surpassed in his preaching all other doctors, even Augustine, "for there he teaches Christ admirably, but when he comes to disputation, he is quite unequal to himself." To Augustine he returned again and again, "finding there," says Melanchthon, "many clear statements, confirming that teaching and comfort of faith which had been kindled in his own breast." Now, probably, as throughout life, Luther's intellectual method was eminently subjective. He worked out his conclusions in the secret depths of his own soul, with much toil and conflict; and then assimilated from without, from Scripture and Fathers, whatever was in accordance with them. He was the willing disciple of Paul and Augustine: he could not conceal his contempt for James and Jerome.[1]

Luther was an inmate of the convent at Erfurt from July 1505 to October or November 1508. This period is cut in two by his admission to the priesthood on 2d May 1507. It is not impossible to reconstruct his mental history, with some degree of probability, through what were the three most important years of his development; but in the absence of dates the story cannot be divided into what took place before, and what after his ordination. The narrative, therefore, of that event must precede the attempt to describe the gradual change in Luther's mind.

Hans Luther had utterly disapproved of his son's entrance upon the monastic life, and had shown his displeasure in an emphatic way. But in May 1507 he was in a softer mood. Two other sons died of the plague. The world was prospering with him. If the father were not wholly dead within him, he must have longed for a sight of the face on which he had once looked so complacently, and which now, for almost two years, had been buried in the living grave of the cloister. He was urged to give his consent to his son's ordination,[2] and to

[1] Kolde, *Aug. Cong.* p. 246; Melanchthon, *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 159; for St. Bernard, Erl. D.S. vol. xlvi. p. 243; conf. *ibid.* vol. xlvii. p. 38; for Gerson, *Coll.* vol. ii. p. 297; *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 393; Lauterbach, p. 18; *Coll.* vol. iii. pp. 134, 270.

[2] The officiating bishop at Luther's ordination was John von Lasphe. In his "Admonition to the clergy assembled at the Diet of Augsburg 1530," Luther says: "My bishop, when he made me a priest, and gave the chalice into my hand, spoke thus, 'Accipe potestatem sacrificandi pro vivis et mortuis.' That the earth did not swallow us both up was unjust, and God's all too great patience." Erl. D. S. vol. xxiv. p. 378.

grace the occasion, as was customary, by his presence; and after much resistance he half unwillingly consented. When the day came on which Martin's first mass was to be celebrated, he rode to the monastery with an escort of twenty horsemen, and made his son a present of as many florins. At the subsequent feast, however, the storm broke out. Luther, at once rejoicing in the reconciliation, and willing to justify himself, asked his father why he had shown himself so obstinately angry. "Whereupon he spoke up before all doctors, masters, and other gentlemen:—'Ye learned ones, have ye not read in Scripture, that a man should honour his father and his mother?' When I heard that I was terrified, and so dumbfoundered that I could answer nothing." Whether the learned ones answered anything we are not told. Luther says that their stock reply was, "It is better to obey God than man." But the honours of the day in disputation appear to have rested with the old miner of Mansfeld, who, pressed with the thunderstorm and the divine call, would only reply, "Would to God that it may not turn out to have been a devil's spectre!" When in 1521 Luther dedicated to his father his work on *Monastic Vows*, he tells the story. "He fortified his heart," he said, "as well as he could against his father and his father's word; but hardly ever in his life had he heard speech of man that more powerfully impressed and abided with him." But he was still in the midst of his religious exaltation, and resolved to work out his salvation on the path which he had chosen. The new leaven was at work in him; but the time of full operation was not yet.[1]

From the moment of his entrance into the convent Luther applied himself with great zeal to the monastic method of perfectness. What he desired above all other things was acceptance with God. The divine justice terrified him; God turned to him only an angry face. It is useless to attempt to distinguish in his case between a pure attraction to holiness and the terror of God's judgments; the two motives were subtly intermingled, and each reinforced the other. He had fled to the cloister to avoid temptation, to put himself in the way of spiritual discipline, and now flung himself into the experiment with all the ardour of his nature. "I was a monk in earnest,"

[1] *Val. Bav. apud.* Tentzel, vol. i. p. 146; Ratzeberger, p. 48; De W. vol. vi. p. 26.

he said; "I lived hardly and chastely; I would not have taken a farthing without the knowledge of my prior; I prayed industriously day and night." This is only one of many similar declarations. In fastings, watchings, prayers,—he says in another place,—he surpassed those who afterwards so bitterly hated and persecuted him. Often, for the space of three days, neither bit nor drop passed his lips; fasting became almost a habit with him. "True it is I was a pious monk, and so strictly observed the rules of my order that I can say, if ever a monk got to heaven by monkery, so should I also have got there; and to this all my comrades in the cloister, who have known me, will bear witness. For if it had lasted longer, I should have tortured myself to death with watching, praying, reading, and other work."[1]

For a time this method was successful. He seemed to have begun another life, to have been lifted into a purer air. It was part of the monastic theory, that profession was equivalent to rebaptism; that the new-made monk "was like an innocent child, fresh from the baptismal font"; even that the monk acquired by his self-maceration a stock of superfluous merits, which could be transferred for a consideration to the laity. But then the thought stole in, that for perfect obedience, no effort, no watchfulness could be a sufficient guarantee. God was unchanged, the divine justice had not lost its awful aspect; how be sure that its inexorable demands were satisfied? Luther's experience in the monastery coincided, he says, with Paul's teaching. "I have seen many who, with the most ardent desire, and the best conscience, did everything to lay their consciences to rest: wore hair shirts, fasted, prayed, afflicted and wearied their bodies with various discipline, which, even had they been iron, would have destroyed them at last; and nevertheless became more fearful the more they toiled." At the moment of his severest self-discipline, he shrank with

[1] Erl. D.S. vol. xlviii. pp. 306, 317 (*Auslegung des Ev. Johannis*); *Ep. ad Gal.* vol. i. p. 107; D. S. vol. xxxi. p. 273 (*Kleine Antwort auf Herzog Georgs nähestes Buch*), *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 185. Melanchthon, in after life, often wondered at his abstemiousness, which contrasted strangely with his large and vigorous physical frame. Even when he was quite well, he would go, he says, for four days together almost without food or drink, and at other times was content with a little bread and a herring for his day's sustenance. *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. p. 158.

horror from the presumptuous thought, that the Holy Spirit was with him; he could not assure himself that God was pleased with his effort, or listened to his prayer. What certainty had he that these things were acceptable to God at all? The toil was never ending, still beginning, and a single slip was at any moment fatal. The same was even more the case with the ceremonial obedience demanded of the priest. The minutest directions were given for the celebration of mass, and a chance word, an incorrect gesture, even an uncertain intonation were all sins. "To have sacrificed with an unconsecrated chalice is a sin, to have celebrated in vestments not yet consecrated is a sin, to have celebrated without the maniple or any other part of the vestments is a sin, to have called the boy, or to have spoken between the words of the Canon is a sin, even to have stammered or hesitated in the words of the Canon is a sin, to have touched the sacred relics is a sin," and so on, through a still longer catalogue of ceremonial offences. The minute prescriptions of the rule as to dress and behaviour gave rise to innumerable possibilities of transgression; and an anxious conscience found perpetual opportunities of self-torment. Nor was confession a sure resource, or absolution a certain comfort. How be sure that every sin, great and small, had been made known to the director? What guarantee that the contrition was of that absolute quality which deserved the absolution and made it valid? The form of absolution made it in part dependent upon "the good works which thou hast done and wilt do for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ;" how be certain as to the sufficient purity of the motive? Take what pains he would, there was always some loophole left. He seemed to have undertaken an impossible task under the eye of an inexorable taskmaster.[1]

[1] Erl. D. S. vol. xxxi. p. 279 (*Kleine Antwort auf Herzog Georgs nähestes Buch*); *Opp. Lat.* vol. xi. p. 241 (*Enarr. in Genesin*); *Ep. ad Gal.* vol. ii. p. 301; D. S. vol. xlix. pp. 168, 314 (*Auslegung des Ev. Joh.*); *Opp. Lat.* vol. xix. p. 102 (*Enarr. Psalmi.* li.); *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 372 (*Responsio ad Catharinum*); D. S. vol. xlviii. p. 203 (*Auslegung des Ev. Joh.*); vol. xxviii. p. 65 (*Vom Missbrauch der Messe*); *Ep. ad Gal.* vol. i. p. 225; *T. T.* vol. ii. p. 303. "If any one then had asked me, at what cost I was willing to buy peace with Christ, and those magnificent glories which now we have through the Word and the Spirit of God, I should have humbly fallen to the earth, and willingly poured forth my life, and asked only to have my conscience set free." *Opp. Lat.* vol. xx. p. 281 (*Enarr. Ps.* cxxxii.)

Let us understand once for all that the spiritual troubles which beset him were not those temptations of the flesh which Protestants suppose to play so large a part in a life voluntarily vowed to chastity.[1] He mentions it as an accustomed device of the evil one, to leave passion unaroused in the first years of profession, that the after struggle might be the fiercer. But he was not himself greatly troubled in this way, "although the more he macerated himself the more he burned." In his commentary on the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians he has described his case with an accuracy that leaves nothing to be desired. "When I was a monk I was wont to think that it was all over with my salvation if ever I felt the concupiscence of the flesh, that is, evil affection, lust, anger, hatred, envy, and the like, towards any brother. I tried many things. I confessed daily. But I profited nothing. Because the concupiscence of the flesh always returned, therefore I could not be quiet, but was perpetually tortured with these thoughts: 'This and that sin hast thou committed, also thou labourest under envy, impatience, and the like. In vain, therefore, hast thou entered the holy order, and all thy good works are useless.' If at that time I had rightly understood the words of Paul, 'the flesh lusteth against the spirit,' and 'these are contrary the one to the other,' I should not have so afflicted myself; but as I am wont to do now, I should have reflected, 'Martin, thou wilt never be altogether without sin, because thou art yet in the flesh, and therefore wilt feel its struggle, according to that word of Paul, 'the flesh striveth against the spirit.' Despair not, therefore, but resist that thou fulfil not its desire; and then thou art not under the law.'"[2]

All this worked upon an awe of sacred things and a vivid perception of their tremendous reality which perhaps more than anything else made Luther what he was. It was not merely that he was a sincere and unquestioning believer; he saw and felt the grandeur of God; and the feeling of the Infinite and Eternal took entire possession of him. But he

[1] "To Dr. Staupitz have I often confessed, not about women, but the real knots" (sondern die rechten Knoten). *T. T.* vol. iii. p. 135.

[2] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi. p. 364 (*De votis monasticis*); *Ep. ad Gal.* vol. iii. p. 20 *sq.*; *Coll.* vol. ii. p. 352.

was not drawn to God: he stood afar off, and was filled with terror. When celebrating his first mass, he was so overcome with fear that he would have fled from the altar had not the prior prevented him. Once, when taking part in a Corpus Christi procession at Eisleben, in which Staupitz carried the Host, he was seized with sudden terror, the sweat broke out upon him, and he thought that he should faint out of sheer anguish. "Ah," wisely said his friend and Superior, "your thoughts are not Christ; Christ does not terrify but console." Cochlaeus has a story, which, although plainly told in an unfriendly spirit, is too like many others better vouched for to be rejected as improbable. Mass was being celebrated in the convent church, and the Gospel was read of the casting out of the deaf and dumb devil, when Luther, suddenly falling to the ground, cried out, "It is not I, it is not I."[1] All his life he was subject to being, as it were, carried out of himself by some absorbing thought, or strong religious emotion. Melanchthon relates how he once saw him, in the midst of a doctrinal disputation, throw himself upon a bed in the next room, and repeat over and over again, mixed with words of prayer, the sentence, "He has concluded all under sin, that he might have mercy upon all." But nothing of this kind is more striking than his own confession. "And I also know a man who declared that he had often gone through these pains, certainly for a very small space of time, yet so great and so hellish as neither tongue can tell, nor pen write, nor one who has not experienced them can believe, so that if they had gone on to the end, or lasted for half, yea, for the tenth part of an hour, he would have perished utterly, and all his bones would have been reduced to ashes." No wonder that, under such circumstances, he persuaded himself that he had defiled his baptismal garment. No wonder that he could not bear to look upon picture or image of Christ. No wonder that he turned away from a God whom it was impossible to placate, to implore the intercession of human-hearted saints. "St, Anna," he says, "was my idol." He had a special devo-

[1] Cochlaeus, p. 2. Düngersheim von Ochsenfahrt also alludes to this story as early as 1530, basing it on the authority of Dr. John Nathin, who was Professor of Holy Writ in the convent at Erfurt. Seidemann, *Luther-briefe*, p. 12.

tion to the Virgin. He chose twenty-one saints, three of whom, in turn, he invoked at his daily mass, and so completed the cycle every week. But it was all in vain. "When I was the most devout, I went a doubter to the altar, a doubter I came away from it; if I had confessed my penitence, I still doubted, had I not, I was in despair." "I had almost died of despair," he says in another place, "if Staupitz had not rescued me."[1]

The precise steps of the process by which Luther's soul at last emerged into light and peace are past recovery. We see him struggling in the slough of despond, sometimes fancying that he had reached firmer ground, sometimes falling into deeper mire, with now this hand, now that, held out to help him. We have heard how the Master of the Novices reminded him that God had commanded His children to hope. A nameless old man, mentioned by Melanchthon, referred him to the article of the Creed, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins," and told him—an interpretation greatly strengthened by a passage in a sermon of St. Bernard's—that he was to put faith in it, not only as a general fact, but as one applicable to his own case. But his chief helper was Staupitz. The counsel of his Vicar seems to have been at once so tender and so judicious as irresistibly to suggest the conclusion that he had been in a similar plight himself and had passed through the same valley of the shadow. At first, indeed, when Luther went to him in confession, he repelled him with,[2] "Master Martin, I understand you not." "Then thought I," says Luther, "no one has struggles and temptations, but only thou. Then was I as a dead body. At last Dr. Staupitz addressed me at table, when I was so sorrowful and beaten down, and said, 'Brother Martin, why art thou so sorrowful?' Then said I, 'What will become of me?' Said he, 'Do you not know that such temptations are good and needful for you, else will no good come of you?'" This seems to have been the beginning of better things. Staupitz strove to call away Luther's mind from

[1] Erl. *Opp. Lat.* vol. vi. pp. 158, 296 (*Enarr. in Genesin*); *Coll.* vol. iii. pp. 169, 184; *T. T.* vol. i. p. 409; vol. ii. p. 164; Melanchthon, *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 158; Weimar, vol. i. p. 557 (*Resolutiones*); Erl. D.S. vol. iv. p. 69 (*Hauspostille*); *ibid.* vol. ix. p. 291 (*Kirchenpostille*); *ibid.* xliv. p. 127 (*Predigten ueber etzliche Kap. des Ev. Matthäi*).

[2] A slightly different account is given, De W. vol. iv. p. 187.

constant self-questioning and petty scrupulosity. Probably he was the confessor who said to him, after a recapitulation of many small offences, "Thou art a fool, God is not angry with thee, it is thou who art angry with God." Once Luther wrote to him, "Oh, my sins, my sins, my sins!" and received for an answer, "Thou wilt be without sins, and yet hast no true sins. Christ is the forgiveness of genuine sins, murder of parents, public blasphemy, contempt of God, adultery—these are true sins." Perhaps it is to this that Luther alludes in a letter to Spalatin, written as late as 1544. "Thus was my Staupitz wont formerly to console me in my sorrow. Thou wishest, he said, to be a sham sinner, and to have Christ as a sham Saviour. Thou must accustom thyself to the thought that thou art a real sinner, and that Christ is a real Saviour; the doings of God are neither unreal nor absurd; He is not jesting with us in sending His Son and delivering Him up for us."[1]

But this appeal to what may be called the common sense of conscience would have availed little without some means of putting conscience to rest, and setting the Godward will in happy motion. A phrase which Staupitz is said to have often used paints the situation vividly. "The law of God says to us men, 'Here is a high mountain, thou must over it.' Then says the flesh and presumption, 'I will over.' Whereupon conscience, 'Thou canst not.' 'Then I will let it alone,' answers last of all despair." What outlet from this difficulty? Another word of Staupitz's supplies the answer. "More than a thousand times," he was wont to say, "I have vowed to God that I would be more righteous, but I have never performed what I vowed. From this time forth I will never again make any such vow, because experience has taught me that I cannot perform it. Unless, therefore, God is appeased and propitious to me for Christ's sake, and will give me a last hour, desired and happy, when I must depart out of this miserable life, I cannot stand with all my vows and good works." But if the work of pleasing God had been done, if the divine justice had been satisfied by another, then

[1] Melanchthon, *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 159; *T. T.* vol. iii. pp. 135, 136; vol. ii. p. 23; De W. vol. v. p. 680.

for the first time the will, having shaken off the burthen that had so long weighed upon and benumbed it, might joyfully enter upon the path of obedience. Only believe and the terror vanishes, the fetters are struck off. The very sense of liberation is new hope and fresh life. The root of true penitence is seen to be in the love of that very divine justice which once showed itself so terrible. It was in this form of the doctrine of justification by faith alone that Luther first found a way of egress from his troubles. Once having received the idea from Staupitz, he began to discern it everywhere—in the New Testament, in the works of Augustine, even in phrases scattered through the Fathers and Schoolmen. We should make a mistake in supposing that he developed the doctrine at this time into anything like philosophical completeness,[1] or that he was at all conscious of having made a discovery in Scripture of which the Church might possibly not approve. It is not likely that the purely intellectual side of the matter was that most prominent in his mind. He had been bound, and he was free; wretched, and he was happy; entangled in a net of scrupulosity, and he was able to rejoice in "the exceeding broad commands" of God. It was only at a later period that he began to find out the irreconcilability of this central doctrine with much in the system of the Church to which he still clung: the immediate result was that as the one took firmer possession of him the other gradually faded out of his life. We are yet a long way even from Luther's first modified revolt against Rome and the excesses of the indulgence.[2]

It is a part of the same fact that Staupitz discouraged Luther from trying to plumb the deep things of faith. As is

[1] See a remarkable passage in the preface to the first volume of his collected works, dated March 1545 (Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. i. p. 22), in which he expressly says that it was not till 1519, after his negotiations with Miltitz, that, applying himself a second time to the interpretation of the Psalms, he found out the Pauline signification of the phrase "justice of God," and apprehended what was meant by "the just shall live by faith." Köstlin (*Luther's Theologie*, vol. i. p. 49) tries hard to prove that Luther has here made a mistake; and, of course, it is possible that, writing a year before his death of what took place twenty-six years before, his memory had failed him; but it is also true that all his other statements as to this particular point are undated, and it is indisputable that he advanced to the position, which he finally took up, only slowly, and with much hesitation.

[2] *T. T.* vol. ii. p. 48; Erl. *Ep. ad Gal.* vol. iii. p. 21; D.S. vol. xlviii. p. 201 (*Auslegung des Ev. Joh.*)

almost always the case with such minds in such circumstances, speculations upon "fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," laid their fascination upon him, and ministered to his distress. "Why, say men under temptation of Satan, listen to the Gospel, when all depends upon predestination? Then Staupitz consoled me with these words, 'Why torturest thou thyself with these speculations? Look at the wounds of Christ, and His blood shed for thee; from them will predestination shine forth.'". "In predestination," said Luther himself, "we forget God, then the *Laudate* ceases and the *Blasphemate* begins. For in Christ all treasures are hidden; and out of Christ all are shut up." There is not only no attempt here to form a system, but there is the tacit acknowledgment that the formation of a system is inexpedient, if not impossible. It is a simple looking to Christ; a belief that He has already done for the soul all that can or need be done, without definition, without theory, without rounding off of conceptions, or reconciliation of difficulties. The point of view is essentially mystic, and the mystic ceases where the dogmatist begins.[1]

So far, and for many years more, Staupitz and Luther walked hand in hand; and Staupitz, as we have seen, never left the Catholic Church, and died at last in her high places. And we may confidently affirm that nothing that Luther had yet thought or said at all touched his allegiance to Rome: the conflict and the victory had all been within himself. He began to preach, though unwillingly, and with much fear, being compelled to do so by Staupitz; he even heard a few confessions. It is fair to conclude, from what we know of his after life, though there is no direct evidence on the subject, that what peace he attained to was not unbroken, that his doubts and difficulties recurred, and that periods of gloom alternated with times of happy confidence. But the great inspiration of his life had now taken possession of him, and he was never really unfaithful to it. He bought a Hebrew dictionary, as if to study the Old Testament in the original. He probably did not make much progress with the language; Greek in any case was a later acquisition. According to his own account, he remained a loyal and devoted subject of the

[1] Erl. *Opp. Lat.* vol. vi. p. 296 (*Enarr. in Genesin*); *Coll.* vol. i. p. 80.

Pope. He calls himself "a most mad Papist"; "so drunken, so drowned in the Papal dogmas as to be ready to slay, if I could, or to consent and co-operate with the slayers of all who detracted from the obedience due to the Pope by a single syllable." But at the very moment that he says "*ex animo*, I held none but the common opinions of Pope and Councils and Universities," he goes on, "Although many of these things appeared to me absurd, and quite alien from Christ, I refrained my thoughts for more than the ten years of which Solomon speaks." One day he found in the convent library a book which bore the abhorred name of John Hus, and opened it, curious to see what the arch-heretic would say. "There I truly found so much that I was amazed that a man who could write so Christianly and so powerfully should have been burned. But because his name was so cruelly condemned, that I thought the walls would become black, and the sun lose his shining for whoever thought well of Hus—I shut the book and went away with a wounded heart, comforting myself, however, with such thoughts as these,—Perhaps he wrote thus before he became a heretic;—for I did not then know the history of the Council of Constanz." But if the leaven of freedom was already working, it was in secret. Men augured great things of him. John Nathin—we have the fact on the authority of a bitter opponent—spoke of him as another Paul, miraculously converted by the direct interposition of Christ. No shadow of suspicion rested upon the orthodoxy of his faith or the purity of his character; and a great ecclesiastical career seemed to open before him.[1]

In the autumn of 1508 Luther was invited by Staupitz to remove to the Augustinian convent at Wittenberg, and to become a teacher in the University founded in that town six years before by Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony. It was not only a momentous but an unexpected turn in his life. In one of his earliest extant letters he apologises to his friend John Braun of Eisenach for having left Erfurt too suddenly to say good-bye. His work began with the winter half-year of

[1] Ratzeberger, p. 47 *note; Coll.* vol. iii. p. 109; De W. vol. ii. p. 203; Erl. *Ep. ad Gal.* vol. i. p. 107; *Opp.*, v. a., vol. i. p. 16 (*Praefatio M. L. in opera sua*); *ibid.* vol. v. p. 400 (*Confutatio rationis Latomianae*); D. S. vol. lxv. p. 81 (*Nachlese*); Seidemann, *Lutherbriefe*, p. 11.

1508-1509. He was to teach philosophy, which "he would only too willingly," he said, "exchange for theology." But he had now found the place in which he was to spend all the rest of his days, and the circumstances in the midst of which he was to do his life's work.[1]

Wittenberg, a town which lies close to the Elbe, though not actually upon it, was the ancient capital of Electoral Saxony. In the way of situation or of natural beauty, it has nothing to recommend it. It stands in the midst of sandy heaths, which stretch in flat and monotonous barrenness for many miles around it. No hills break the level line of the horizon, nor is there any rural richness in the landscape to make up for the lack of more striking beauty. After it became famous as a seat of learning, its name was fancifully declared to be equivalent to "Hill of Wisdom"; but it was really derived from the white sandhills which form the banks of the Elbe. Even now it consists of little more than one street, perhaps three-quarters of a mile in length, extending from what was once the Elster Gate—outside of which Luther burned the Pope's bull—at one end, to the Castle and the Castle Church at the other. Not far from the Elster Gate, on the left-hand side, is the Augustinian convent; a little beyond it Melanchthon's house; then the street expands into a square or market-place, surrounded by handsome old houses, and having the Rathhaus in the midst. Looking from this square, now adorned with statues of Luther and Melanchthon, the visitor sees the twin towers of the Parish Church rising from another open space, to which access is gained by a covered way, passing through which he finds himself before a worn and battered edifice, bearing frequent marks of alternate ruin and repair, and by its side a Chapel of Corpus Christi, also dating from the ages of faith. From the market-place the main line of street again leads to what remains of the Castle, the façade of which, flanked by two massive and truncated towers, looks out upon the open country. Attached to this is the Castle Church, a building which has fared far worse in the frequent wars of Germany than its parochial sister. Some of its monuments, the graves of Luther and Melanchthon, and the

[1] De W. vol. i. p. 6.

bronze effigies of Electors Frederick and John, are happily intact; but there is very little in the existing church upon which the living eyes of the Reformer can have rested. This, with one or two side streets of little importance, and some stately burgher houses, to which recollections of the Reformation still cling, makes up the Wittenberg of to-day. Its University was incorporated with that of Halle in 1817, and a seminary for Protestant preachers only imperfectly supplies its place. The careless traveller, if ever he sought it out in its sandy solitude, would look upon it as a very ordinary North German town of the third class; its architecture is not particularly interesting, and all that remains to it is an air of old-world respectability, which does not reach to splendour. It requires an effort to recollect that in the first half of the sixteenth century it could put forward a better claim to be the intellectual centre of Europe than Paris or Bologna or Oxford.

In 1508, however, Wittenberg was little better than a poverty-stricken village. It had been a favourite residence of the Ascanian dynasty of Saxon princes which died out in 1422. Many of them were buried in the Franciscan Church, while the Castle Church, originally built in 1306, had been refounded between thirty and forty years later, by Rudolph I., as a place of worship and interment for himself and his descendants. But when the House of Wettin succeeded to the Electoral dignity, Wittenberg ceased to be an object of preference; the Castle was allowed to fall into decay, and the town had no longer anything to distinguish it from others of like unimportance, until, in 1502, Frederick the Wise took the first steps towards making it the seat of a university. Christopher Scheurl, a young jurist of Nürnberg, who, in 1507, was invited to become Professor of Law at Wittenberg, had previously, in 1505, delivered before the University of Bologna, in which he was pursuing his studies, a flowery oration in praise of Germany in general, and the Saxon princes in particular. In this he declared, among other things, that Frederick had found Wittenberg a city of brick, and had left it a city of marble. But unless this was a conscious oratorical flourish, Scheurl must have been wofully disappointed

when he arrived at Wittenberg. Myconius, describing it as it was, not long afterwards, says, "Up to this time Wittenberg was a poor insignificant town; little, old, ugly, low, wooden houses, more like an old village than a town." Even in 1513 it counted only three hundred and fifty-six rateable houses. Luther must have found it a strong contrast to wealthy, busy, luxurious Erfurt. He says that it was on the further verge of civilisation, a traveller that went a little way on would be in the midst of barbarism. The people were rude in manners, careless of learning, unsusceptible to Gospel teaching. Saxony had the reputation of being the most drunken part of Germany, Wittenberg of being the most drunken town in Saxony. Scheurl told the same tale when he arrived at the city of his hopes; "the people," he said, "were above measure drunken, rude, and given to revelling." Presently all this was idealised by enthusiastic children of the Reform; Wittenberg became another Zion, and an etymology, more pious than scientific, which Luther himself did not disdain to countenance, discovered an identity in name between the villages round Jerusalem and those in the neighbourhood of the Saxon city. But a first impression, though long obliterated, often returns to mind, and Luther found a rude and unmalleable element in Wittenberg to the very last.[1]

To understand the circumstances under which the new University was founded, we must take up at a remoter point the history of the Saxon House of Wettin. In the middle years of the fifteenth century it was represented by the Elector Frederick and his brother William, Landgrave of Thuringia. The latter died without issue; Frederick was the father of two boys, Ernest and Albert, who are memorable in German history as having been, in their childhood, stolen by Kunz von Kaufungen, though safely restored, after a day or two's fright, to their parents. These lads were the progenitors respectively of what are known as the Ernestine and Albertine lines of Saxon princes. The territories of the House fell

[1] Stier, *Wittenberg im Mittelalter*, p. 14; Stier, *Die Schlosskirche zu Wittenberg*, p. 4; Von Soden, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Reformation*, p. 10; Scheurl, *Briefbuch*, vol. i. p. 44; Schmidt, *Wittenberg unter K. Friedrich dem Weisen*, p. 3; Myconius, *Hist. Ref.* p. 27; Mathesius, p. 206 B; *Coll.* vol. iii. pp. 101, 102; *T. T.* vol. i. pp. 16, 65; vol. iv. p. 672; Erl. D.S. vol. xxviii. p. 140 (*Vom Missbrauch der Messe*); Köstlin, *M. L.* p. 91.

into three main divisions: Electoral Saxony, of which Wittenberg may be taken as the capital; the Misnian land, of which Meissen, Dresden, and Leipzig were the chief towns; and the fairer and more fertile Thuringia, in which stood Eisenach, Weimar, Jena. Over these the princes ruled, sometimes conjointly, sometimes in pursuance of formal family divisions, the head of the Ernestine branch always, in virtue of his seniority, retaining the electoral dignity and territory. At the beginning of the sixteenth century Frederick, surnamed the Wise, was Elector of Saxony. His brother John, who afterwards succeeded him in the Electorate, reigned by his side, in complete fraternal amity, over the Thuringian territory, which they held in common. The Misnian land, perhaps the richest portion of the whole inheritance, had for its ruler Duke George, sometimes called the Bearded, the son of the little Albert whom Kunz von Kaufungen stole. But a close friendship united the two branches of the House, and the obligations of kindred were fully acknowledged.[1]

In 1502 Frederick was thirty-seven years of age, a popular ruler in Saxony, and gradually making his way to recognition as the ablest and, after the Emperor, the most powerful of German princes. He had been educated at the chapter school of Grimma, where he learned to read, and, in a somewhat imperfect way, to speak Latin and French. The connection of the whole family with the Church was unusually close. Of Frederick's younger brothers one, Albert, was Elector and Archbishop of Mainz; another, Ernest, Archbishop of Magdeburg and Administrator of Halberstadt. Frederick himself was full of the piety of his age. The last years of the fifteenth century were, in Germany, years of an increased fervour of religious faith and practice, in which he bore his part. In 1493, accompanied by Duke Christian of Bavaria and a large retinue, he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre, receiving there the honour of knighthood, and bringing back a plentiful store of relics. In the same spirit he rebuilt and re-endowed the Castle Church of Wittenberg, which was completed in 1499, and solemnly consecrated in 1502, by the Cardinal Legate Raymond, Bishop of Gurk.

[1] Böttiger-Flathe, *Geschichte von Sachsen*, vol. i. p. 385 *seq.*

This building, which, in accordance with its purpose as a private chapel of the Electoral family, consisted only of a vaulted choir, unsupported by pillars and without transepts, he designed to make the religious centre-point of his dominions, and with that view enriched it with an extraordinary collection of relics. The number, according to a contemporary list, amounted to 5005, and among them was everything that a fanciful and childish superstition could suggest as worthy of reverence. Once a year, on the Monday after *Misericordias*, these were solemnly exposed to the view of pilgrims, who were attracted in great numbers to the show by large promises of indulgences. Ten thousand masses were solemnised in the church every year. It was calculated that a pilgrim who knew how to make the most of his opportunities could obtain indulgence for 1443 years. Cardinal Raymond himself offered a hundred days' indulgence for every Paternoster said on Frederick's behalf.[1]

Nothing, therefore, could be farther from Frederick's thought in founding a university than that it should become in any sense a centre of action against the Church. Not only was his orthodoxy beyond reproach, but his procedure shows that he was not conscious of any dissatisfaction with existing methods of thought or teaching. His principal advisers in the matter were Staupitz and Martin Pollich of Mellerstadt, or Mellrichstadt, the physician who had attended him to the Holy Land. Had it not been for Luther's subsequent rebellion, Staupitz would never have been known except as a Vicar of the Augustinian Congregation, who was zealous for conventual observance, and touched by the old Catholic mysticism of Germany. Pollich, who was already Doctor of Medicine and of Philosophy, and who, after the University was founded, added to these a third degree in Divinity, was a man of many-sided culture, one of the older generation of humanists, and known to be opposed to some of the absurd extravagances of the scholastic theology. Frederick's chief motive seems to have been a desire to provide higher

[1] Spalatin, *Friedrich der Weise*, p. 22. For a curious account of Frederick's pilgrimage see the same work, Beilage, vol. i. p. 76; Stier, *Schlosskirche*, p. 8; Schmidt, *ubi supra*, p. 15; *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. p. 219; Köstlin, *M. L.* vol. i. p. 93.

teaching within his own dominions, a duty which it was said that the Diet of Worms in 1495 had declared to be incumbent on every Elector. Leipzig, where a university had existed since 1409, was in the part of Saxony which, by a partition made in 1485, had fallen to the Albertine line. Erfurt, as we have seen, was an almost free city, leaning more upon the Archbishops of Mainz than upon the Electors of Saxony. No site for the new institution, therefore, seemed to be so fit as Wittenberg. Connected with the Castle Church was a well-endowed Chapter or *Stift*, to the members of which might be entrusted definite duties of teaching. It was in all likelihood Staupitz who suggested that the Augustinian convent could be turned to the same account. The Franciscans, who also were established in Wittenberg, held altogether aloof.[1]

It was no unusual thing that a new university should be thus closely connected with the Church, or that the funds for its endowment should be provided by a kind of half secularisation of ecclesiastical revenues. Education of every kind was so completely in the hands of the clergy, that the application of Church lands and tithes to the support of university teaching was not looked upon as diverting them from their original purpose. Vienna, Heidelberg, Köln, Erfurt, as well as later foundations, Basel, Greifswald, Ingolstadt, and Rostock, were all provided with an income in the same way. At the same time Wittenberg was one of the first German universities which was based, not upon a Papal bull, but upon an Imperial charter. In the document, dated July 6th, 1502, which gave permission to teach and grant degrees in all faculties, Maximilian declares the protection of all sciences to belong to the head of the Empire, whose duty it is "to provide for the happy progress of knowledge, good arts, and liberal studies, that they, drawn from the fountain of Divine Wisdom, may make our subjects more apt to the administration of the common-weal, to foresight in the provision of things necessary to life." Nevertheless, there was no intention of dispensing with the blessing of the Church. Cardinal Raymond, in an instrument which alludes to the Imperial charter already

[1] Löscher, *Reformations-Acta*, vol. i. p. 87.

granted, confirmed the foundation of the University, and, in virtue of the plenary powers entrusted to him by Pope Alexander VI, especially established in it the privilege of granting degrees in Theology and Canon Law. But this did not satisfy the pious scruples of Frederick, and a bull issued by Pope Julius II on the 20th of June 1507 once more confirmed all that had already been done, and gave the highest ecclesiastical sanction to the endowment of the University out of the property of the Church.[1]

This was chiefly effected by a union between the University and the College of All Saints which had its seat in the Castle Church. Its head was converted into a Dean; under him were an Archdeacon and Canon, each of whom enjoyed a separate prebend or benefice, and each had to undertake fixed teaching duties in the University. They were in all twelve: three Theologians, four Jurists, five Masters of Arts who had received a philosophical training. Other endowments followed upon this; both Frederick and his brother and successor John kept an open hand to the University which they had founded. In 1508 the statutes by which it was to be governed were enacted; they had been drawn up by Scheurl, who received ten gulden as his remuneration. They did not proceed from the University itself; they were a code of laws enacted by the Elector, upon the advice of his councillors, and imposed by him upon the new institution. They established the University as a corporation, with a Rector at its head, divided into four faculties, each of which was presided over by a Dean. There were no "nations"; unconscious of the coming concourse from all parts of Europe, the founders thought only of a High School for Electoral Saxony and Thuringia. What was peculiar was the institution of four "studii generalis Reformatores," the Rector and three others, who were to stand at the head of everything in the Elector's place, and to whom he gave "supreme and absolute power of every kind." But this office seems to have fallen into decay before twenty years had passed; probably

[1] Muther, *Die Wittenberger Universitäts-und Facultätsstatuten vom Jahre 1508* (Prolegomena); Grohmann, *Annalen der Universität zu Wittenberg*, vol. i. ch. i.

the dignity of those who held it was overshadowed by the solid authority of Luther and Melanchthon. The connection of the University with established religion was drawn very close; the Castle Church was its church; its pulpit the place where its exercises were read; its door the board to which academical notices were affixed. The University was solemnly consecrated to God and His immaculate Mother. Augustine was adopted as the patron saint of the whole institution; Paul of the theological, Ivo of the legal, Cosmas and Damian of the medical, Catharine of the arts faculty. In some of these names it is possible to discern a secret omen of what was coming.[1]

Four hundred and sixteen students matriculated in 1502, under the rectorate of Martin Pollich. In 1503 this number fell to 390; in 1504 to 271; in 1505 to 127. In 1506 a pestilence compelled the removal of the University to Herzberg, and it was not till 1508 that the number of matriculations again rose to 179. In May 1507 Christopher Scheurl was elected Rector. Among the records of an office which he is pompously said to have filled "with the utmost dignity, magnificence, humanity and the general good-will," we find that he forbad members of the University to frequent taverns for the purpose of drinking; and imposed a penalty of half a gulden upon the wearing of arms. But we possess a more valuable relic of Scheurl's year of office than this, in a list of lectures for the year 1507, which he published with an appropriate preface. In this he describes Wittenberg as a place of a wonderful mildness of air; free, by God's grace, from every epidemic; full of kindly citizens. A year's board may be had for eight gold gulden; and, by the munificence of the Princes, degrees are conferred gratis.[2] By favour of the Supreme Pontiff and the Emperor, Wittenberg possesses all the privileges which are enjoyed by Bologna, Padua, Pavia, Perugia, Paris, Leipzig. Finally, the good man breaks almost into a rhapsody: "If only you will believe me, who have myself been educated in Italy, and have travelled over almost the whole of it, so many, and so variously learned men

[1] Muther, *ubi supra;* Schmidt, p. 13 *seq.;* Grohmann, vol. i. p. 103.

[2] According to Grohmann (vol. i. p. 5), this privilege was granted only for three years. It had apparently ceased before Luther's graduation, *vide* p. 184.

neither Padua possesses, nor Bologna herself, the mother of studies." The ensuing programme of lectures, however, hardly bears out the boast. In theology there are five professors, of whom three are known to us by name, Staupitz, Pollich, and Trutvetter. In canon law there are seven, of whom Scheurl himself is one; in Imperial law three, Scheurl's name appearing again. There are four teachers of medicine, among whom Pollich is once more enumerated. Amsdorf, whom we shall learn to know as the most devoted of Lutherans, heads a list of nine philosophical teachers, of whom the second is a man even more famous in the history of the Reformation, Carlstadt. How little the University was yet emancipated from old methods of teaching may be inferred from the fact that the former is announced as lecturing "in via Scoti," the latter "in via S. Thomae." When we come to polite letters, we find that Balthazar Phacchus proposes to read Virgil's Eneid, Valerius Maximus, and Sallust's Jugurthine War; Scheurl, Suetonius; George Sybutus, Silius Italicus, and a poem of his own on the site of Wittenberg. And that is all. There is no Greek, no Hebrew, no history, and only such physics as philosophy and medicine can provide between them. A list of five extraordinary lecturers in philosophy, and as many "in litteris secularibus"—the subjects of whose instruction are not given—closes the meagre programme.[1]

The transference of Luther from Erfurt to Wittenberg was part of a general policy. Frederick and his adviser Staupitz did their best to attract teachers from the older to the younger university. Marschalk, whom we have already learned to know as one of the elder humanists of Erfurt, joined the new institution in the year of its foundation, and remained at Wittenberg till brighter prospects drew him, first to Brandenburg, and then to Rostock. In 1507 he was followed by Jodocus Trutvetter of Eisenach, Luther's old teacher, a man who stood in the highest esteem as a lecturer on philosophy. He was at once elected Rector, and made Archdeacon of the College of All Saints on the new foundation. He remained

[1] Förstemann, *Alb. Acad. Vit.* p. 1 *seq.*, 21; Strobel, *Neue Beyträge zur Literatur bes. des XVI. Jahrhunderts*, vol. iii. pt. ii. p. 57.

till 1510, when he was chosen Archdeacon of the Cathedral at Erfurt, and decided, to the displeasure of the Elector, to go back to his old academical allegiance. About the same time Henning Göde, the chief law teacher at Erfurt, left it in consequence of the riots of 1509-1510, and entered himself at Wittenberg. He was received with open arms, was made Provost of the College of All Saints, a post which he held till his death, and lectured upon canon law. He was one of the last representatives of old opinions at Wittenberg, a man of great legal learning and deserved influence, who was chosen by Frederick to accompany him to the election and coronation of Charles V, and who lies buried with his master and the great Reformers in the church over which he presided, the last of its Catholic Provosts. We know that Trutvetter had been Luther's teacher; it is not impossible that during the few months in which he studied law, the future Reformer had been the pupil of Göde. At all events, he found well-known Erfurt faces in Wittenberg, and could not have felt wholly strange there from the first.[1]

On the whole, the intellectual atmosphere of the Wittenberg to which Luther came in 1508 is fairly clear to us. The teachers whose names we know belong to the class of men upon whom the new learning had begun to make an impression, though it had yet done little to wean their minds from traditional methods of thought. The more pronounced humanism of Mutian, of Eoban Hess, of Crotus, of Petreius, develops itself at Erfurt in almost entire independence of such influences as prevail at Wittenberg. Hermann von dem Busche delivers an oration at the opening of the University, and enters his name upon its books, but we hear no more of him; and it is not till 1510 that Ulrich von Hutten, in the course of his wanderings, pays it a passing visit. Staupitz, Trutvetter, Scheurl, Göde, Pollich, had none of them broken with the past, either consciously or unconsciously; all we can say of them is, that they were men not incapable of movement and willing to turn their faces towards new light. Carlstadt, afterwards so

[1] Kampschulte, vol. i. p. 53; Erhard, vol. iii. p. 411; Förstemann, *Album Acad. Vit.* vol. i. pp. 20, 31; Plitt, *Jod. Trutvetter*, pp. 36, 41; Stier, *Schlosskirche zu W.* pp. 58, 60.

furious an innovator, makes his first appearance at Wittenberg as a hard and dry scholastic, lecturing "in via S. Thomae," and not reading the Bible, till he had been for eight years a Doctor of Theology. Amsdorf writes to Spalatin in 1518 that he had then hardly begun to read genuine books of theology, and should not have done so, had not "Martin with his own money bought him Augustine and sent it to his house." "Led by his advice, his requests, his earnest persuasions, I have left the studies which I liked: I have left logic, I have left the logical theologians, I have left philosophy—but with the utmost regret: so little delight did I take in Augustine, Jerome, and all doctors of that kind, whom I thought to be mere grammarians, for indeed they were and are still unknown to me. Of a truth, I thought that the highest wisdom was hidden in Scotus and Gabriel (Biel) and their like." It was the life of Erfurt over again, before the new humanism had laid hold of it.[1]

All we know of Luther's first academical work at Wittenberg is, that he read lectures on Aristotle's *Dialectics* and *Physics*, meanwhile not neglecting his private study of the Scriptures. Among the many things in this period of his life which are hidden from us, is the mood in which he entered upon his new career. It was, at least in part, one of depression and humiliation. He probably came to Wittenberg as an act of monastic obedience. He certainly did not look upon his removal from Erfurt as a promotion. There was a custom, half solemn, half burlesque, at the German universities of the time, which was called a "deposition." The new student, the "Bachant," fresh from the hardships and coarseness of his school, or possibly his wandering in search of instruction, was received at a meeting of his fellows, presided over by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. A speech was made to him (one delivered by Luther himself on such an occasion is preserved in the *Table Talk*), in which he was jocosely and yet seriously admonished to lay aside all his evil ways, and to conform himself to the decencies of academical life, and a

[1] *Liber Decanorum Fac. Theol.* Strauss, *U. v. Hutten*, p. 54; *Theol. Acad. Viteb.* ed. Förstemann, p. 1; *St. u. Krit.* 1878, p. 698. *Album*, p. 2; *Coll.* vol. ii. p. 214;

series of comic ceremonies was closed by pouring a glass of wine upon his head. Luther afterwards said that when he went from Erfurt to Wittenberg he was "deponiert." His meaning can only be that his entry upon what turned out to be the solemn business of his life was accompanied by experiences that were not wholly pleasant, though what these were it is impossible now to say. His real work in Wittenberg did not begin till after his return from Rome in 1512.[1]

The events of Luther's life between October 1508, when he first went to Wittenberg, and October 1512, when he took his doctor's degree, are involved in some obscurity. To throw upon them what light is possible, I must describe the complicated process by which, in the German universities of that day, a student attained the rank of Doctor in Theology.

Having passed through the philosophical curriculum, which was the indispensable preliminary to graduation in any special faculty, he became in the first place "Baccalaureus Biblicus," or "tanquam ad Biblia," and was empowered in that capacity to expound the Scriptures. At this stage he remained for a year, or if a monk, only for six months, at the end of which he might be admitted "Sententiarius." The meaning of this was that he was now entitled to lecture on the first two books of the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard. The next step was to become "Sententiarius Formatus," by which was conferred upon him the right of expounding the whole work of the master of the *Sentences*. Then the candidate proceeded *ad licentiam magistrandi*, or the condition of a Licentiate, upon which followed, without further delay, the final admission to the degree of Master or Doctor of Theology. Now Luther, as we have seen, had taken his degrees in philosophy at Erfurt. On St. Luke's Day, 1508, we find his name, "Fr. Martinus Lüder de Mansfelt," in the list of students matriculated at Wittenberg, the third of six, who are described as Augustinians. The degree of Baccalaureus Biblicus followed on the 9th of March 1509, the entry in the Dean's book being accompanied by this remark: "But being called to Erfurt, he has not yet

[1] Melanchthon, *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 160; *Coll.* vol. ii. pp. 16, 240; *T.* vol. ii. p. 70; vol. iv. p. 547; Muther, *Aus dem Universitäts-u. Gelehrtenleben im Zeitalter der Reformation*, p. 20.

satisfied the Faculty." To this is added in Luther's own handwriting, evidently of a later date: "Nor will he do. Because at that time, being poor and under obedience, he had nothing. Erfurt therefore will pay."[1]

Why Luther thus went back to Erfurt at the very beginning of his career at Wittenberg we do not know; nor, as the Erfurt registers for those years are lost, are we able to ascertain his academical position there. Kolde, who has made minute and fruitful research into the history of the Augustinian order in Germany, asserts that during Luther's second stay at Erfurt he was occupied in negotiations with the German protector of the order, the Archbishop of Magdeburg, or rather with his deputy, Adolph von Anhalt, Provost of the Cathedral of Halle; a statement which, though hardly supported by adequate evidence, sufficiently tallies with the fact that in 1511-1512 he was sent to Rome on Augustinian business. And it is certainly true that he took his doctor's degree in Wittenberg in October 1512. But where, and how, did he pass through the stages of graduation intermediate between bachelor and doctor? Two still extant letters of Luther's, one of June 1514, addressed to the Prior and Fathers of his old convent, the other of December in the same year, to the Theological Faculty of the University of Erfurt, throw a little light upon this dark place. It seems that he was accused of unfaithfulness to his academical obligations in having, contrary to the statutes which he had sworn to observe, proceeded to the degree of Doctor in Theology elsewhere than at Erfurt. We need not go into the details of his defence. It comes out that, in a somewhat strange way, his graduation had been divided between the two universities. The first and last steps were taken at Wittenberg, the intermediate ones at Erfurt. We are still left without information as to Luther's abrupt abandonment of Wittenberg immediately after his first settlement there, or the reasons of his return. But it is perhaps open to us to conclude that there was a friendly rivalry between the two universities for the services

[1] Jürgens, vol. ii. p. 213; *Lib. Dec.* p. 144; Statute *De promotionibus*, *Album*, p. 28; *Lib. Dec.* p. 4. The date here actually given by Förstemann is March 1508, but this is evidently a mistake for 1509. Conf. Köstlin, *Theol. St. u. Krit.* 1874, p. 320 *note*.

of a man, who, though yet untried, was thought likely to add lustre to either.[1]

It has long been thought that Luther's journey to Rome,[2] which in part filled up this interval, and which I suppose to have taken place in the winter of 1511-1512, had something to do with Augustinian politics. So early a biographer as Cochlaeus represents him as having been sent thither by certain convents who differed in opinion with the Vicar, and who selected him as their advocate, because he was "sharp of mind, and bold and vehement in contradiction." When, however, we recollect that the Vicar in question was Staupitz, and that Luther was then and for some years afterwards not only an admiring friend, but a willing instrument in his hands, the statement of Cochlaeus becomes hardly credible. And recent

[1] Kolde, *Martin Luther*, vol. i. p. 74, who refers to Seidemann, *Lutherbriefe*, p. 11; De W. vol. i. p. 12; vol. vi. p. 4. Conf. *Theol. St. u. Krit.* 1874, p. 319 *et seq.*

[2] That Luther's journey to Rome was made in the autumn and winter months may be fairly inferred from allusions in his *Table Talk* to pomegranates (*Coll.* vol. i. p. 374; *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 677) and to grapes (*T. T.* vol. i. p. 181). But was it in 1510-1511 or in 1511-1512? If we could regard it as absolutely settled that the object of his journey was precisely the affair of the Augustinian order mentioned in the text, it would be decisive in favour of the latter date, as Staupitz did not publish the bull till September 1510, and some months must be allowed for opposition to ripen. But there is nothing in Melanchthon's phrase (*Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 160) that Luther went to Rome, *propter monachorum controversias*, or the corresponding though inaccurate account of Cochlaeus, to determine the occasion with absolute certainty. Luther's own testimony, so far as it is accessible to us, either in his writings or in the *Table Talk*, is chiefly though not quite uniformly in favour of 1510. In one place (Erl. D. S. vol. xxvi. p. 146) he says, "*Anno Domini* (if I am right) 1510, I was in Rome"; and again (*ibid.* vol. xxxii. p. 424) he speaks of passing through Milan in the same year. Passages from the *Table Talk* may be cited in a similar sense. On the other hand, Melanchthon (*Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 160) appears to fix 1511-1512 as the date; while Mathesius (p. 6 A), professing to quote from a MS. in Luther's own hand, distinctly says 1510. But two considerations seem to make it necessary to adopt the later date. One is, that in the letter which in December 1514 Luther addressed to the Dean and Doctors of the Theological Faculty at Erfurt (De W. vol. vi. p. 5) he speaks of himself as having been one of them "for nearly a year and a half." The other is, that while it is all but certain that Luther saw Pope Julius II in Rome (*Coll.* vol. i. p. 165; *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 687; Mathesius p. 6 A), that Pontiff was absent from the city from September 1510 to the end of June 1511. It is more likely that Luther, writing many years afterwards, or in loose talk loosely reported, should make a mistake, than that the chronological indications above given should lead us astray. It may be mentioned that Köstlin, after at first accepting the earlier, has settled finally upon the later date. Vide *Theol. St. u. Krit.* (Köstlin) 1871, p. 47 *et seq.*; *ibid.* (Köstlin) 1874, p. 321 *et seq.*; *ibid.* (Buddensieg) 1879, p. 335 *et seq.*; *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* (Kolde) vol. ii. p. 460 *et seq.*; *ibid.* (Brieger) vol. iii. p. 197 *et seq.*

researches into Augustinian history have placed the matter in its true light. Staupitz, in his anxiety to extend the principles and practice of the Congregation of the Observance over the whole of the Augustinian order in Germany, had procured a Papal Bull, by which the office of Vicar of the Congregation, and that of Saxon Provincial, were united in the same person, with the result of practically welding into one the two bodies over which they presided. More than this, he had prevailed upon the General of the order, before the bull was published, to confer both offices on himself. To this, strange to say, objection was made, not by the laxer, but by the severer communities; and seven convents, with that of Nürnberg at their head, appealed to Rome. It is not necessary to follow the matter into its details, which are indeed only imperfectly known. In the autumn of 1511, if our chronological data be correct, Luther, in all probability accompanied by another Augustinian, John von Mecheln, set out for the Holy City, returning in the spring of the following year. It is hardly needful to say that his mission was to support the policy of Staupitz at headquarters. It is difficult to decide whether Erfurt or Wittenberg was the starting-point of the journey. We only know that on September 10th, 1510, Luther was in Erfurt, and that on May 8th, 1512, he was again in Wittenberg.[1]

The travellers were expected to proceed on foot, trusting for shelter and food by the way to monastic hospitality. Luther took with him ten gold gulden; but this was not for travelling expenses, but to pay an advocate in the Papal courts. Various local legends exist, which, if they could be trusted, would help to fix his route: it seems most likely that he took his way through Switzerland, while it is certain that

[1] Cochl. p. 3; Kolde, *Staupitz*, p. 233 *seq.*, p. 241; *M. Luther*, vol. i. p. 75; Kolde, *Analecta Lutherana*, pp. 3, 4; conf. Erl. *Opp. Lat.* vol. iv. p. 13 (*Enarr. in Genesin*); *Zeitschrift für K. G.* (vol. ii. p. 460 *et seq.*) It was a rule of the order, strictly enforced, that two brothers should always travel together. We know that John von Mecheln, an Augustinian monk, who had just returned from Rome, was, on the 25th February 1512, sent by Staupitz from Salzburg to Köln. The Wittenberg *Lib. Dec.*, p. 10, records the fact that the same J. v. Mecheln was admitted to the degree of D.D. on 16th Sept. 1511, and to the Theological Faculty on the 4th of October. This seems to be decisive as to the date of Luther's journey, if we assume that John v. Mecheln was his companion.

on his return he stopped at Augsburg. Of the duration of the journey we may form an estimate from the fact that in 1505 Nicholas Besler, also an Augustinian monk, took six weeks to get from Munich to Rome. Some few incidents of travel, some general impressions received by the way, survive in Luther's *Table Talk* and elsewhere. He felt the beauty and the fertility of Italy; especially the fruitful plain of Lombardy, watered by its mighty river, and lying between two great mountain chains, struck him with admiration. He mentions the size of the grapes, the healthful properties of the pomegranates, the richness which the olives distilled from the rocks. He was much impressed by the magnificence of some of the monasteries that sheltered him; their fasts, he said, were more luxurious than feasts in Germany. Yet the Italians were sober in comparison with his own countrymen, though at the same time arrogant, deceitful, capable of the basest crimes, full of lusts, natural and unnatural. He was enthusiastic about the splendour, the efficiency, the cleanliness of their hospitals and foundling asylums, commemorating especially those at Florence. Milan, through which he passed on his return, afforded him a surprise; he was refused permission to say his mass there, on the ground that he was not Ambrosian, and so appears to have found out, for the first time, that the universality and identity of Catholic ritual had its exceptions. He may be supposed to have entered Rome by the Flaminian Gate—the Porto del Popolo—and tradition houses him hard by, in the Augustinian convent to which the well-known Church of St. Maria del Popolo was attached.[1]

Notices of Rome are scattered pretty abundantly through Luther's *Table Talk*. But it is clearly necessary to discriminate between his mood at the time and the light which after-experience threw upon his recollections. Nothing that he saw in Italy detracted from the feeling of high-wrought enthusiasm with which he approached the Holy City. Twice at Erfurt he had made a general confession, a process which he desired

[1] M. Dresser, *Narratio brevis de profectione M. Lutheri in urbem Romam; Theol. St. u. Krit.* 1882, p. 550; Seidemann, *Lutherbriefe*, p. 64; *Coll.* vol. i. pp. 121, 195, 376; vol. iii. p. 35; *T. T.* vol. i. pp. 141, 182; vol. iv. p. 679; Lauterbach, pp. 87, 104, 165; Erl. D.S. vol. xxxii. p. 424 (*Kurzes Bekenntniss vom heiligen Sacrament*).

to repeat and make more efficacious at Rome. So it was with great expectation of spiritual good that, when first the domes and towers of the city burst upon his sight, he fell to the ground, exclaiming, "Hail, holy Rome!" And this appears to have been his habitual mood during the few weeks that he remained there. It is quite a mistake to suppose that the seed of Protestant rebellion, which undoubtedly lay hid in his heart, had yet begun to germinate. There was nothing in his spiritual experiences at Erfurt which had produced in him any conscious dissatisfaction with Catholic doctrine and practice. "I was," he said in 1530, "like a mad saint in Rome; ran through all churches and holes; believed everything that is lied and stunk there. I have also said more masses than one at Rome; and while there was heartily sorry that my father and mother were yet living, so willingly would I have released them from purgatory by my masses and other excellent works and prayers. There is a saying at Rome, 'Happy the mother whose son reads a mass on the Saturday of St. John!' How willingly would I have made my mother happy! But it was too thronged, and I could not get to the altar." Yet there were interruptions to this mood of exaltation. The confessors to whom he opened his conscience were very ignorant men. And when he was painfully toiling on his knees up the Santa Scala, a voice seemed to repeat to him in tones of thunder words which had followed him from Erfurt to Wittenberg, and from Wittenberg to Rome, "The just shall live by faith." The old doubt, whether through pilgrimage and penance really lay the way to peace, returned with irresistible force, and he left the labour and the prayer incomplete.[1]

Naturally the external aspects of the Eternal City made a deep impression on Luther's quick and receptive mind. "At the peril of his life," he says, he investigated the ruins of classical Rome, then less pillaged and destroyed than modern eyes have seen them. He enumerates the great round of the

[1] *Coll.* vol. i. p. 165; vol. iii. p. 169; *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 687; Lauterbach, p. 9 *note;* Erl. D.S. vol. xl. p. 284 (*Auslegung des* 117. *Psalms*). The characteristic story of the Santa Scala is preserved by G. Mylius, *Ep. D. Pauli ad Romanos . . . explicatio,* Jenae, 1595. He relates it in his preface on the authority of the Reformer's son Paul, who had heard it from his father in the year 1544. Köstlin, *M. L.* vol. i. p. 781.

Coliseum, the Pantheon, with its single eye open to the heavens, the Catacomb of St. Calixtus with its Papal Crypt, the height of the Tarpeian rock, the Franciscan convent on the Capitol, as having fixed themselves in his memory. He saw the stately processions in which the Pope passed from church to church. So far as we know, he was not successful in his mission, but he found the procedure of the Papal courts of law one of the few things to be praised in Rome. The police he characterises as severe and yet not efficacious. He saw and heard much, the full significance of which he did not recognise till long afterwards, but which he knew how to describe in vivid phrase, and to use as the barb of the sharpest invective. Not for a thousand gulden, he was wont to say, would he sell his personal knowledge of Rome. Stories of the superhuman wickedness of Alexander VI were still going about the streets while he was there, and he could see for himself how Julius II was bathing Italy with blood. He found Cardinals held in repute as saints whose one merit it was to abstain from unnatural vices. Men said openly, that if there were a hell Rome was built over it, to which others added, that before long it must break through. In the public services of the Church there was hardly a pretence of reverence. He heard it told as a good story, that for the words of consecration men jestingly substituted "Panis es, panis manebis, vinum es, vinum manebis." Indecent haste in celebrating the mysteries was a common thing: "Before I got to the Gospel my neighbour priest had finished his mass, and was calling to me 'Passa, Passa,' come away, come away." "Everything is laughed at in Rome," he says in another place, "and whoever is grieved thereby is a *Bon Christian*, that is, a fool." And yet it would be too much to assume that he left Rome disenchanted. Such a mood as that which bid him hail the Holy City with prostrate reverence, would hardly within a month be changed to another, and a quite opposite. The charm of sacred sites, the splendour of ceremonies, the magic of historical association, the awe of faith throned in her central seat would still work powerfully within him. Only upon reflection would moral repulsion awaken, till as time went on, and oppositions of feeling grew more definite, the spell ceased to operate, and

Rome revealed herself to him as no longer the city of saints and martyrs, but the throne of Antichrist, and the sink of all iniquity. But it would be to anticipate the result of processes which were hardly begun, if we were to suppose that in 1512 Luther turned his back upon Rome, in deep disgust, and with half-developed designs of rebellion.[1]

With the autumn of 1512 we are again in clear daylight, and on firm chronological ground. Luther has come back to Wittenberg and taken up his abode in the Augustinian convent. The Prior is his old friend Wenceslaus Link, who was at school with him at Magdeburg, and whose course has hitherto run on parallel lines with his own; he himself fills the office of Sub-Prior. It is very probable that during his first brief stay at Wittenberg trial had been made of his preaching powers. No church in connection with the Augustinian convent had yet been built; the lines for one had indeed been marked out, but the walls hardly rose above the ground. "In the midst of these foundations," says Myconius, "stood an old chapel, built of wood and daubed over with clay, very ruinous, and propped on all sides. It was, as I myself have seen, about thirty feet long and twenty broad. . . . On the south wall was a pulpit of old roughly hewn boards." "For all the world," he goes on to say with pardonable enthusiasm, "it had the look which the painters give to the stable in Bethlehem, where Christ was born." It was in this humble place that Luther first established his fame as an orator; here, we must suppose, that the Elector heard him, greatly approving both the matter and the manner of his preaching. For when it was a question of his taking his doctor's degree, and so wholly devoting himself to theology, it was Frederick who provided the necessary funds.[2] Long afterwards Luther used to point out the pear tree in the convent garden under

[1] *Coll.* vol. i. pp. 162, 163; vol. iii. p. 169; *T. T.* vol. iii. p. 185; vol. iv. p. 688; Lauterbach, p. 64; Mathesius, p. 6 A; Erl. *Opp. Lat.* vol. iv. p. 264 (*Enarr. in Genesin*); *ibid.* D.S. vol. xxiii. p. 10 (*Vorrede auf den Unterricht der Visitatorn*); *ibid.* vol. xxvii. p. 90 (*Von dem Papsthum zu Rom*); *ibid.* vol. xxxi. pp. 327, 328 (*Von der Winkelmesse*); Kolde, *Staupitz*, p. 241.

[2] The receipt which Luther gave to Frederick's chamberlains for the fifty gulden required for this purpose, fortunately survives to contradict a scandalous story, which Cochlaeus, p. 4, rather insinuates than openly affirms. De W. vol. i. p. 11; conf. vol. vi. p. 8; Burkhardt, *Luther's Briefwechsel*, p. 1.

which Staupitz urged the desirability of his graduation, and at last imposed it upon him, in the name of his monastic obedience. He pleaded his youth, his fragile health, his dread of the responsibility of the pulpit. He was only in his twenty-ninth year; at Paris Doctors of Theology were made only after ten years' study; at Erfurt, not till they were fifty years of age. "Master Staupitz," he said, "it is a matter of life and death to me. I shall not survive it a quarter of a year." But Staupitz knew with whom he had to deal, and parried the pleading with a joke. "Do you not know," he said, "that our Lord God has many great matters to settle? So that He is in great need of wise and prudent people to help Him with their advice. Wherefore, even if you die, you must be His counsellor." Luther yielded, but against his will. He always seemed to think that he had been compelled into his vocation. "I was dragged by the hair of my head," he said once, "to the office of teaching and preaching, but had I known then what I know now, ten horses should hardly have drawn me into it." The final steps were taken between St. Francis' Day, the 4th of October 1512, and the 22nd of the same month, when he was formally admitted into the Senate of the Theological Faculty. He was evidently quite unconscious of having given any offence at Erfurt, for he invited his old comrades of the Augustinian convent to join in the festivities of his graduation.[1]

The five years between 1512 and 1517, between Luther's full resumption of work at Wittenberg and the publication of the Ninety-five Theses against indulgences, form a period of great importance in the growth of his mind. They were years of much intellectual and practical activity. He was lecturing in the University. He was preaching in the parish church at Wittenberg, often four times a day, in place of the stated minister, who was a man in infirm health. He was pursuing his Biblical researches with great ardour, adding meanwhile to his slender store of attainments in Hebrew, and perhaps in

[1] Myconius, *Hist. Ref.* p. 24; Melanch. *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 160; Kolde, *Staupitz*, pp. 243, 356; *Coll.* vol. i. p. 409; vol. iii. pp. 109, 154; *T. T.* vol. i. p. 26; vol. ii. p. 369; Lauterbach, pp. 103, 160; Erl. D. S. vol. xxxix. p. 256 (*Auslegung des* 82. *Psalms*); De W. vol. i. p. 9; *Lib. Dec.* pp. 12, 13, 82.

Greek. He was Regent of studies in the Augustinian convent; sorely tried, too, with the number of poor scholars who were sent to him, and for whom he was expected to find food and shelter. From 1515 to 1518 he was District Vicar over the ten convents of Wittenberg, Dresden, Herzberg, Gotha, Salza, Nordhausen, Sangerhausen, Erfurt, Magdeburg, and Neustadt; *decanus vicarius*, as he called himself, or when Eisleben was added to the list, *undecies prior*. Of the letters which he wrote in this capacity, enough remain to show that he filled the office with dignified and judicious efficiency; now consoling a despondent brother, now sternly deposing a prior who could not rule his household. In a letter addressed to Lang, dated October 1516, he says, "I have need of almost two secretaries; all day I do little but write letters," and then goes on to give an account of his avocations, including work in the convent, in the university, at the parish church, throughout the monasteries over which he was set. "Seldom have I sufficient time to say my hours, and to celebrate—to say nothing of my private temptations by the world, the flesh and the devil." At the same time he meets this accumulation of toil with high spirits and indefatigable energy. He cannot make up his mind to send away promising students. "Twenty-two priests, twelve young men, in all forty-one persons, subsist on our more than very scanty resources; but God will provide." In the midst of all this the plague made its appearance at Wittenberg. "Thou persuadest me and Master Bartholomew," he writes in the same letter, "to fly with thee. Whither should I fly? I hope the world will not come to an end if brother Martin does. The brethren, indeed, if the plague should make progress, I will disperse in every direction: I am stationed here, and my obedience forbids me to fly until I receive fresh orders. Not that I do not fear death—for we are not the Apostle Paul, but only a lecturer upon him—but I hope that the Lord will deliver me from my fear."[1]

The moment at which Luther began his work in Wittenberg was propitious to his influence. Trutvetter left the place, as we have seen, in 1510; Pollich, the first Rector of the

[1] Lauterbach, p. 66; Kolde, *Staupitz*, p. 264; De W. vol. i. pp. 19, 28, 31, 37, 41, 42, 56, 64.

University, died in 1513; Link was prior of the Augustinian convent; Lang, an old Erfurt friend, and in Greek the most learned of the band, had migrated to Wittenberg in 1511, and became *Baccalaureus tanquam ad Biblia* in 1515.[1] We find no specific traces of either Link's or Lang's work in the University, and the inference is that Luther was left to make his impression upon it, unimpaired by any effective rivalry. An important circumstance was the friendship which he now formed, or more probably renewed, with George Burkhardt, usually known as Spalatin. A few weeks younger than Luther, he passed from St. Sebald's school at Nürnberg in 1499 to the University of Erfurt, whence in 1502 he migrated to Wittenberg. Here his name is found in the first list of matriculated students. In 1505 he returned to Erfurt with the intention of studying jurisprudence, but in 1507 took orders, and became pastor of Hohenkirchen. Before long, however, he was recommended by Mutian to the Electoral family of Saxony as a fit person to be entrusted with the education of John Frederick, the only son of Duke John, and the presumptive heir to the Electorate. This appointment fixed his fate. He became chaplain, historiographer, friend, and ecclesiastical adviser both of Frederick the Wise and his successors. At the moment of which we are speaking, he was acting as tutor, not only to John Frederick, but to his cousins Otto and Ernest, Dukes of Brunswick-Lüneburg, the sons of the Elector's youngest sister Margaret, young men who had matriculated at Wittenberg in 1511. And with Luther he formed a very close and firm friendship, which lasted till the Reformer's death. The collection of Luther's letters includes no fewer than 415 addressed to him. He is the intermediary between the Electors—especially Frederick, who never had any personal communication with Luther[2]—and the Reformers; to him they address their requests, and he is their kindly, zealous, successful agent at the Court. Without himself possessing any remarkable abilities, he knows a king of men when he sees him; from the first he regards Luther with unqualified admiration,

[1] The date 1516 given in the *Lib. Dec.* p. 18, is plainly a mistake for 1515.

[2] Erl. D. S. vol. xxvi. p. 67 (*Wider Hans Wurst*), "Denn ich seine Stimm mein Lebenlang nie gehöret, noch sein Angesicht gesehen, ohne zu Wormes auf dem Reichstage."

and is faithful to him to the end. According to Lang (1515), he "revered and consulted him as an Apollo." He hardly knows whether to admire most the extent of his learning, the wholeness of his character, or the keenness of his judgment.[1]

Luther had never any doubt as to what his vocation was. The business, he thought, of a Doctor of Theology was to expound the Scriptures. Already in revolt against the Schoolmen and their master Aristotle, he passed by in silent contempt the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, which were supposed to form the proper subject of the lectures of the finished theologian. As to the order, however, in which he applied himself to the Biblical books, some uncertainty exists.[2] The account which he himself gives in his Preface to his collected works, is that he began with the Psalms,[3] then went on to Romans, Galatians, Hebrews, and returned in 1519 to the Psalms again. All his life long he had what Catholics would call a devotion to the Psalter. That wonderful collection of lyrics, which gives voice to all the highest and keenest religious aspirations of the Jewish people at every later stage of its development, answered exactly to the subjective character of his own religiousness. It is a record of the soul's intercourse with God in all the varied moods in which piety mingles; it is the changeful melody drawn from the human instrument by the hand of the Divine musician. Unconsciously, it may be, Luther's preferences drew him into a Biblical region where priests and rites did not enter, but where praise and penitence and aspiration found their own way to God, and were accepted or rejected for what they were in themselves. All his life long he was wont to throw the

[1] *Album Acad. Vit.* p. 38, corrected by Kolde, *Anal. Luth.* p. 4; *ibid.* p. 5. Lange to Mutian; Spalatin to Lange, in Kampschulte, vol. ii. p. 10 *note*, p. 11 *note*. For particulars of Spalatin's early life, see his biography by Ed. Engelhardt, chaps. i. ii. iii. [Kolde's article on Spalatin in 2d ed. of Herzog's *Real-Encyklopädie für Theol. u. Kirche*].

[2] Melanchthon (*Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. p. 160) makes him begin with the Ep. to the Romans. But this is certainly contrary to all the probabilities of the case.

[3] Erl. *Opp.*, v. a., pp. 1, 22. The Weimar ed. of Luther's works (vol. iv. p. 527) contains a fragmentary "Praelectio in Librum Judicum," which is part of a "Lutherfund" recently made in the Rathsschulbibliothek at Zwickau, by Dr. Buchwald. The MS., however, is not in the Reformer's own handwriting, and bears signs of being an inaccurate transcript. From internal evidence the Weimar editors ascribe the lectures, which they confidently believe to be Luther's, to the years 1516-1518.

expression of his deepest and most personal feeling into the form of an exposition of a Psalm, and there were Psalms in which he saw his own spiritual history as in a mirror. It is therefore not wonderful that the first record we have of his teaching is a Latin Psalter,[1] which he caused to be printed with wide lines and broad margins in order that he might fill up the blank spaces with expository notes. These notes he appears to have afterwards copied out and enlarged until they formed a tolerably complete and connected commentary, which has recently been disinterred from the Royal Library at Dresden, and edited with loving care. But this was not all. The first of Luther's works which he himself gave to the press was an exposition in German of the Seven Penitential Psalms, which was printed at Wittenberg in 1517, and soon went through many editions. Then in 1519 he again returned to the Psalter, in what he called his *Operationes in Psalmos*. But the excitement of the Diet of Worms interrupted all peaceful academical labour, and the commentary was carried no farther than the 21st Psalm.

From the earlier of these expositions, from such of his sermons as have been preserved, and from a Commentary on

[1] The Psalter in question, the precise genealogy of which it is not necessary to give in this place, is preserved in the Ducal Library at Wolfenbüttel. Walch, in his edition of Luther's works (vol. ix.), gives this commentary, translated into German by Rambach (see Pref. to vol. ix. p. 257), and Riehm has quite recently (1874) published in the original Latin that part of it which relates to the Seven Penitential Psalms, under the title *Initium Theologiae Lutheri*. A second and fuller form of this commentary has been found in a MS. in the Royal Library at Dresden, which once belonged to John Ernest Luther, a grandson of the Reformer's, and was preserved by him as an heirloom (quem ut κειμήλια asservavi). This has been published in two goodly volumes by Seidemann: *D. M. Lutheri Scholae ineditae de Psalmis habitae annis* 1513-1516, *e codice MS. biblio. Reg. Dresdensis:* 2d ed. Dresd. 1880. Conf. *Theol. St. u. Krit.* 1875, p. 114 *et seq.* (*Luther's älteste Psalmenerklärung*, by Riehm), and *ibid.* 559 *et seq.* (*Die ersten Vorlesungen Luther's über die Psalmen*, by Seidemann). Of the Weimar ed. vol. iii. and nearly the whole of vol. iv. are occupied with this exposition of the Psalms. They contain not only the exposition of the Psalms derived from the Wolfenbüttel and the Dresden MSS., but a third series of marginal annotations made by Luther on a copy of the *Quincuplex Psalterium*, edited by Le Fèvre d'Etaples, and printed by Henri Etienne in 1509, and again in 1513. A copy of the first edition of this book, with notes in Luther's handwriting, was discovered in the Dresden Library in 1885, by Professor Schnorr von Carolsfeld. The student may be referred for statements of Luther's exegetical work at this period, which do not agree with one another in all respects, to Erl. D.S. vol. xxv. p. 291 (*Von den Conciliis und Kirchen*); *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 175; conf. De W. vol. i. pp. 41, 42, 47.

the Ten Commandments, "preached to the people of Wittenberg,"[1] and first published in 1518, it is possible to gain a tolerably clear conception of Luther's theological position at this period of his life. Melanchthon describes the character and effect of his lectures in terms[2] which would almost justify the inference that the first preaching of the Reformation must be antedated to Luther's earliest activity in Wittenberg. And no doubt there was much that was novel and striking in his earnest presentations of the theology which he had beaten out for himself in the struggles of his cell at Erfurt. But he was a long way yet from understanding, as he afterwards understood, that difference between law and Gospel which Melanchthon declares to have been a chief subject of his preaching. He says of himself that even in 1519[3] he could not comprehend Romans i. 17, "For therein is the righteousness (justitia) of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith!" that he hated the words "justitia Dei"; that it was only after much meditation, and by the mercy of God, that he perceived their true meaning, and grew to love, as much as he had hated, them; and finally, that he found, beyond all hope, his interpretation of them confirmed by Augustine. Unless, therefore, this clear and explicit testimony is to be rejected, it is plain that through this period Luther was only struggling towards the light into which he afterwards emerged. Though still tempted and troubled, he had worked out his own peace; but the theoretical basis of his theology had yet to be firmly laid. In one sense his revolt

[1] Decem praecepta Wittenbergensi predicata populo MDXVIII. Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 394. Besides the works enumerated in the text there is an exposition of the Lord's Prayer, which was delivered by Luther in the shape of lectures in 1517, and taken down and published by John Agricola in January 1518. In the course of the same year it was reissued in a revised form by Luther himself, under the title, *Auslegung des Vater Unsers für die einfältigen Layen:* Erl. D. S. vol. xxi. p. 156; Kawerau, *J. Agricola*, p. 14.

[2] "Postea enarrare epistolam ad Romanos coepit, deinde Psalmos. Haec scripta sic illustravit, ut post longam et obscuram noctem nova doctrinae lux oriri videretur, omnium piorum et prudentum judicio. Hic monstravit legis et Evangelii discrimen, hic refutavit errorem, qui tunc in scholis et concionibus regnabat, qui docet, mereri homines remissionem peccatorum propriis operibus, et homines coram Deo justos esse disciplina, ut Pharisaei docuerunt. Revocavit igitur Lutherus hominum mentem ad filium Dei, et ut Baptista monstravit agnum Dei, qui tulit peccata nostra, ostendit gratis propter filium Dei remitti peccata, et quidem oportere id beneficium fide accipi," *Corp. Ref.* vol. vi. pp. 160, 161.

[3] Erl. *Opp.*, v. a., vol. i. pp. 22, 23.

was consciously begun, for he had deliberately turned away from Aristotle and the Schoolmen to seek divine truth in the Scriptures, but he had as yet no suspicion that the end would be a disagreement with, much less a severance from, the Catholic Church. Other Reformers had arisen before him, who had successfully poured new wine of faith into old ecclesiastical bottles; why should his fate be different from theirs?

It would be an almost useless labour to analyse, as some industrious Germans have done,[1] the early works of Luther which I have enumerated, in the hope of collecting from them an exact account of his theological belief. For these were years of growth and change, often perhaps for the most part unconscious; years in which he was slowly working his way towards a firm foothold of faith not to be fully reached till long afterwards. At the same time the method of his thinking is not difficult to be discerned. With him the centre-point of Christianity was that conviction of justification by faith which he had learned from no teacher, but which was the priceless result of his own spiritual struggles. Whatever else was true or false, that stood fast. It was the key to unlock all mysteries, divine and human; whatever seemed to contradict it, could not rightfully command belief. Naturally Luther finds this principle and its corollaries everywhere in Scripture, not less in the Epistles of Paul, where he first learned it, than in the Psalms, which he proceeds to interpret in accordance with it. And as he is yet far from the belief of his later years, that there is but one simple sense in Scripture; as he still interprets every word literally, tropologically, allegorically, and anagogically, and sometimes goes so far as to find a sixfold meaning in Holy Writ,[2] it is not difficult for him to extract from the Psalter whatever he wants to find in it. But his doctrine of justification is in a more or less fluid condition. He is sure that we are justified by faith in Christ. He is sure that in the work of salvation God is everything, man nothing. But he is far from having worked out the idea of "faith only" into the precision which it afterwards assumed

[1] *Vide* Köstlin, *Luther's Theologie*, vol. i. p. 64 *seq.*; Hering, *Luther's erste Vorlesungen als Lehr-und Lebenszeugnis*, *Theol. St. und Krit.* 1877, p. 583 *seq.*

[2] Seidemann, *Psalmen*, vol. i. p. 399.

with him. The omnipotence of divine grace has not yet developed into a consistent doctrine of election. These things will come presently, when the characteristic ideas of his theology are beaten out upon the anvil of controversy; now he is only lecturing and preaching to a crowd of admiring hearers. He is all unconscious of being a heretic, and no keen-eyed critic has found him out.

It is plain, however, that he has already, for good or evil, made his own the subjective principle, which is the life of what was afterwards called Protestantism. However little he may know it, he has a court of appeal within, whose decisions, should they come into conflict with those of Church or Pope, must prevail with him. And this conflict is certain; it may come sooner or later, but come it must. So all through the expositions and sermons of these years we see the leaven working, though yet far from having finished its work. Luther's method of exposition is still the traditional, though he uses it to bring out results that are the reverse of traditional. But the external apparatus of the Catholic Church is either neglected or comes in for hard knocks. He speaks with a kind of general reverence of the saints, and recognises the value of their intercession; but a large part of his exposition of the First Commandment consists of an attack upon their popular cultus,[1] which could hardly have been more trenchant had it been written thirty years later. His reverence for bishops in the abstract is unexceptionable; they are the leaders of the Church, in them Christ is set over the people, by their mouth God speaks; but he does not hesitate to say very hard things of their avarice and profligacy, and breaks into eager remonstrance when it is proposed to make Staupitz a bishop. The theory of the Papacy and of the monastic life is not attacked, but popes and monks alike are reminded of their shortcomings in very plain terms. But the peculiarity of his position is clearest in regard to the abuse which was finally to cut him off from the Church. In his exposition of the Psalms he is by no means on the level of the Ninety-five Theses. He does not deny the existence of the heavenly treasure, or the power of the Church to dispense it; he thinks

[1] Weimar, vol. i. p. 411 *seq.*; conf. pp. 425, 426.

that there may be some communication of the merits of the saints to humbler brethren. But in the Sermons he has got much further than this. Tetzel is already hovering about the frontiers of Saxony, and Luther sees, with his own eyes, the unspeakable coarseness and immorality of the administration. On the one hand, he notes how the indulgences, as presented by their vendors and accepted by the people, strike at the root of all spiritual religion; on the other, how base and sordid are the motives of the great churchmen who hawk them about. And in some of the trenchant words which he uttered from the pulpit of Wittenberg we may hear the muttering of the coming storm.[1]

The one element of conscious revolt which is to be traced in Luther's thought and speech during these years lies in his turning away from Aristotle and the Schoolmen to the Scriptures and the Fathers. This did not in itself involve doctrinal rebellion, though, as the event proved, it carried the seeds of doctrinal rebellion within it. But nothing could be more momentous as a change of method. It was as marked a deviation from the old paths as that of the humanists, though made in a different direction; they turned from the dry rigidity of the scholastic system to the freshly-moving life of classical antiquity, Luther to the fountains of Hebrew and Christian piety in the Bible. Once he had drunk large draughts of inspiration there, he found it impossible to go back to the arid subdivisions, the pedantic arrangement, the formal deductions of Aquinas or Peter Lombard, which were to all his theological compeers the only form in which scientific theology had ever presented itself. "Truly," he says in his exposition of the Eighth Commandment,[2] "we have been led astray by Aristotle and his comments. And if there were no other, this single argument would suffice, that there are as many sects and heads in that heathen beast as Hydrae in the Lerna; for there are Thomists, Scotists, Albertists, Moderns, and Aristotle has become four-headed, and a kingdom divided against itself; and it is marvellous that it is not desolate—yet the time is near at which it shall be desolate." This,

[1] Weimar, vol. i. pp. 65, 135, 141; Seidemann, *Psalmen*, vol. i. pp. 8, 112; vol. ii. pp. 46, 211; De W. vol. i. p. 24. [2] Erl. *Opp. Lat.* vol. xii. p. 197.

it will be seen, is sufficiently trenchant. He does not prefer one form of scholastic theology to another; he aims, in destroying the authority of Aristotle, to cut away the common root of all. And in this he was almost unexpectedly successful. The depth and eagerness of his conviction, his vigorous and persuasive eloquence, the absence of serious rivalry, the natural attractiveness of the principles which he laid down, all drew the studious youth to his side, and Wittenberg gradually grew to be unlike every other German university. As usual Luther is bold, decisive, aggressive. In February 1517 we find him sending to Trutvetter, through Lang, what he calls "letters full of questions against logic and philosophy and theology—that is, of blasphemies and maledictions against Aristotle, Porphyry, the Sententiaries, in short, the ruined studies of our age." What the old scholastic thought of it we do not know; meanwhile his audacious disciple went on with his polemic. A few weeks later he announces to the same congenial correspondent, that "our theology and St. Augustine, by God's help, go on prosperously and reign in the University; Aristotle descends gradually to eternal ruin; the lectures on the *Sentences* are wonderfully disdained; only teachers of the new Biblical theology can hope for hearers." All this culminated in a series of Ninety-seven Theses, "Contra Scholasticam Theologiam," which Francis Günther of Nordhausen, a candidate for the degree of Baccalaureus Biblicus, offered to defend under Luther's presidency, on the 4th of September 1517. Of these, the forty-first, "Almost the whole of Aristotle's ethics is the worst enemy of grace"; the forty-third, "It is an error to say that without Aristotle no man becomes a theologian"; and the forty-fourth, "No one becomes a theologian unless he becomes one without Aristotle," are decisive enough.[1]

Two influences, neither of them directly Biblical, were powerful with Luther at this time. The first, and the more decidedly intellectual, was that of Augustine. He was not yet prepared to make that appeal to the Bible, and the Bible only, which was characteristic of his maturer thought; he went behind the Schoolmen to the Bible as interpreted by the Fathers; and of the Fathers, Augustine fell in most with his mood. But

[1] De W. vol. i. pp. 15, 57; Weimar, vol. i. p. 221; *Lib. Decan.* p. 20.

he was something more than a submissive disciple of Augustine. His theology was the outcome of his own personal struggles, the result of his own painful meditation on Scripture, and the great African Father did not so much produce the impression as deepen and confirm it. They were kindred souls; and it was a singular joy to Luther to find himself, after having long wandered in the dry and waterless deserts of scholasticism, in a region of what seemed to him perennial springs of life. But it was characteristic of Luther's first introduction to Augustinian theology—as well as of his final presentation of it—that he approached it, not from the divine, as did Calvin, but from the human side. He accepted, indeed, the immutability of the divine decrees; but not this, so much as the incapacity of man to work out his own salvation, was the germinal point of his theology. In regard to this matter, too, we have an early set of Theses, which were defended by Bartholomew Bernhardi of Feldkirch, under Luther's presidency, probably in September 1516. The question put is, "Whether man, made in the image of God, can by his own natural strength keep the commandments of his Maker, or do or think anything good?" The answer, of course sternly and sweepingly negative, is supported by copious citations from the Bible and Augustine.[1]

The second influence was of a very different kind. In 1516 there came into his hands, we do not know how, a manuscript containing about a fourth part of the little treatise which has since had so wide a reputation as the *Theologia Germanica*. It made a deep impression upon his mind, and he published it with a short preface in the December of that year. It was, and has continued to be, anonymous; but Luther connected it in his own mind with the sermons of Tauler, with which, we must suppose, he was acquainted. Writing to Spalatin, just after the publication of the book, he says,[2] "If it delights thee to read a theology, pure, solid, after the fashion of the ancients, written in the German tongue, you can get the sermons of John Tauler, of the Order of Preachers; of all which I send thee, as it were, an epitome herewith. For I have

[1] Weimar, vol. i. p. 142; *Lib. Decan.* p. 19; De W. vol. i. p. 34.
[2] De W. vol. i. p. 46.

never seen, either in Latin or in our own language, a wholesomer theology, or one more consonant with the Gospel." Two years afterwards he procured the rest of the book, and forthwith issued it, preceded by a very characteristic preface. Next to the Bible and St. Augustine, he said, no book had ever come into his hands from which he had learned, or would wish to learn, more of what God and Christ and man and all things are. He adduces it as a witness to the soundness of the theology which he was teaching amid much opposition. "Read this little book who will, and then say whether our theology is old or new." And then he goes on, with a touch of that patriotic feeling which won him an access to so many German hearts, "I thank God that in my German tongue, I so hear and find God as I, and those with me here, have never found Him, either in Latin, Greek, or Hebrew." The *Deutsche Theologie*, thus started on its career of modest usefulness, has been reprinted more than seventy times.[1]

No one, however, who knows and is able to estimate the *Deutsche Theologie* truly, will suppose that it is identical in religious tone with Lutheranism at every point of its development. It is like the *Imitation of Christ*, one of the great mystical books of the world, and freer even than that celebrated manual of devotion from dogmatic suggestion and limitation. That the *Imitation* is a Catholic book forces itself upon the mind of every reader; its piety never loses the scent of cloister incense; and it is only the depth and worth of the contents that enable the Protestant reader to forget the peculiarities of the form. But the *Deutsche Theologie* moves in a region above ecclesiastical individuality and difference. It has to do only with that immediate intercourse and union of the divine with the human spirit which is the atmosphere breathed by all mystical religion. Given a belief in God and Christ and eternal life, it makes an equal appeal to all readers. There is nothing in it of predestination, or human incapacity for good, or justification by faith alone.

[1] Preface to edition of 1516, Weimar, vol. i. p. 152; to edition of 1518, *ibid.* vol. i. p. 375. Miss Winkworth's translation of the *Theologia Germanica*, by which it is at present chiefly known in England, is made from an edition by Professor Pfeiffer, based on a MS. recently discovered, and somewhat longer than that used by Luther. Each recension has its warm defenders. Zealous Lutherans are apt to think that "the old is better."

These things may be read into it at the reader's pleasure, but so may many other things quite incompatible with them. It is difficult, therefore, not to believe that the side on which it touched Luther was that on which he was least distinctively Lutheran. It took possession of him because he was one of those deep and passionate souls to which the pure voice of religion makes effectual appeal; for the moment, he could not help using its utterances as the vehicle of his own thought, though he did not see that they also expressed something wider and more universal. At the same time he had a real affiliation upon the line of German mystics. Except in his worst and most dogmatic days, there is a certain inwardness, a penetrating directness about his thought and speech, which distinguish his prevailing religious mood from the calm, ethical, good sense of Zwingli, and the systematising logic of Calvin. The *Deutsche Theologie* introduced a strain into his thinking which can be traced through all his growth and change.

The years between 1512 and 1517 were a period of great intellectual excitement in Germany. It was in the autumn of 1509 that Pfefferkorn paid his memorable visit to Reuchlin, with results that have been already narrated. The first imperfect edition of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* was published at the end of 1515, the second part in 1517. But although Luther had had his intellectual training in Erfurt, which was now the centre of enthusiasm for Reuchlin, and was bound by ties of old friendship with many of the chief Reuchlinists, he held himself aloof from the controversy. It is true that in a letter to Spalatin, of uncertain date, he expresses himself strongly on Reuchlin's side as against the Dominicans of Köln; but we do not hear of his taking any active part in the fray, and when the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* appear, he puts them somewhat contemptuously aside. His mood was too serious for such light-hearted trifling; he was on the eve of a struggle of which he could not foresee the end. The truth is that he had never really belonged to the party of the humanists, and now had decisively taken another direction. A time is coming, before long, at which they will be full of enthusiasm for him, but it will be, so to speak, on his own terms, and the imperfect and ill-

concerted alliance will soon be dissolved. His polemic against Aristotle is hardly in the interests of humanism; he has no enthusiasm for classical culture; he thinks heathen virtue nought, and its method altogether opposed to that of evangelical righteousness. In a word, he is Hebraic, not Hellenic, to the core. But even when the contrast between Christian and classical modes of thought is not in question, it is easy to see how strongly his mind is set in the direction from which it never afterwards swerved. Nothing can be more significant than the way in which he speaks of Erasmus, long before their formal friendship had been dissolved in the acids of controversy. They read Paul with different eyes. Luther cannot understand Erasmus' preference of Jerome to Augustine as an interpreter of Scripture. The more he studies Erasmus the less he likes him. "I fear," he says, "that he does not sufficiently put forward Christ and the grace of God, in which things he is much more ignorant than Stapulensis (Le Fèvre d'Etaples); human things prevail with him over divine." Already the movement at Wittenberg has disengaged itself from the general tendency of the age in Germany, and takes a line of its own.[1]

The name which best expresses the tendencies of this period is still that of Staupitz; though it may be questioned whether the influence of the disciple on the master was not stronger than that of the master on the disciple; and the time was rapidly approaching at which they sorrowfully parted company. But the evangelical and the mystic were as subtly intertwined in Staupitz as in Luther, and neither at this moment dreamed of any breach with the Church. At Wittenberg Luther indisputably held the first place. The doctors of the old scholastic type, on whom the University rested its earliest reputation, had left it; Melanchthon, with his fresh humanistic culture, had not come. Carlstadt, recalled by the Elector from Italy in 1516, suddenly, and with his wonted levity, went over to the new theology, and in April 1517 offered 152 Theses for disputation, in which he took the Biblical and Augustinian side. Amsdorf, afterwards so un-

[1] De W. pp. 1, 8, 37, 39, 40, 52. Reuchlin (Meyerhoff, p. 234) is reported to have said of Luther: "Gottlob, nun haben sie einen Mann gefunden, der ihnen so blutsaure Arbeit machen wird, dass sie mich alten Mann, wohl in Frieden werden hinfuhren lassen."

compromising a Lutheran, still lectured "in via Scoti," and it was not till 1518 that, under the persuasion of Luther, he began to study Augustine. But Luther's lectures attracted all the studious youth; the parish church was crowded when he preached; the disputations at which he presided marked the highest point reached by speculation. John Lang, another Augustinian and pupil of Staupitz, now presided over the convent at Erfurt, whence Luther's career was watched with eyes of very various judgment. At Nürnberg, then the first of German cities in wealth, in refinement, in intellectual activity, Luther's influence began to prevail. Christopher Scheurl, to whom we owe much of our earlier knowledge of the University of Wittenberg, had returned to the service of his native city at the end of 1511, and in January 1517 began an eager correspondence with Luther. Before this time, however, Staupitz had made a deep impression upon the burghers of Nürnberg by a series of advent sermons, twenty-four in number, on the doctrine of predestination, which Scheurl had published both in Latin and in German. The Augustinian Church was crowded; the humanists, the artists, the stately patricians who governed the free city, talked of nothing else. Next came Link, also an Augustinian, whose sermons at once deepened the mark which Staupitz had made, and drew men's attention to Luther as the chief representative of the new religious tendency. All seemed to open to him a brilliant future in the service of the Church. He held high office in his order, and might expect still higher; he enjoyed the favour of his prince; his university hung upon his words; no consciousness of discord with the Church infused uncertainty into his utterance. But in 1516 Tetzel appeared upon the frontiers of Saxony. A chronicle of Grimma is the insufficient authority for the story that when Luther heard of his proceedings, he exclaimed, "Now, if God will, I will make a hole in his drum." What he afterwards said of himself was, "I was dead to the world till God thought it time, and Juncker Tetzel drove me with the indulgence." [1]

[1] Jäger, *Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt*, pp. 6, 7; *Theol. St. u. Krit.* 1878, p. 698; Kolde, *Staupitz*, pp. 265, 270; von Soden, *Beiträge*, p. 25; Scheurl, *Briefbuch*, vol. ii. p. 1; Caselmann, *W. Link's Leben*, p. 341; Köstlin, *M. Luther*, vol. i. p. 150; *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 188.

CHAPTER V

LUTHER'S NINETY-FIVE THESES

In 1517 Albert of Brandenburg was Elector Archbishop of Mainz, Archchancellor of the Empire, and Primate of Germany. The younger of the two sons of John, Elector of Brandenburg, he was born in 1490, and in 1499 succeeded in common with his brother Joachim to the inheritance of his house. It was not, however, the way of the Hohenzollerns to divide their territories; and before long it was determined to indemnify the younger brother for the loss of his share in Brandenburg by a brilliant ecclesiastical position. As early as 1509 a foundation for future greatness was laid in his admission to the Chapter of Mainz; while soon after a similar promotion at Magdeburg opened the way for his accession to that Archbishopric also. He had not long to wait. In 1513 he was admitted to priest's orders, and sang his first mass; in the same year he was elected Archbishop of Magdeburg, and ten days afterwards Administrator of the neighbouring diocese of Halberstadt. Before the confirmation of his election came back from Rome, the Archbishop of Mainz, Uriel von Gemmingen, died, on the 8th of February 1514, and the Hohenzollerns cast eyes of longing on this rich and splendid piece of preferment. To make a youth, not yet twenty-four and who had been ordained only a year, Primate of Germany seemed, notwithstanding his high birth, a bold undertaking; but fortune favours the bold, especially when they have cash in hand. The see had already been vacant twice within ten years—after the death of Archbishop Berthold in 1504, of Archbishop

Jacob von Liebenstein in 1508, and on each occasion 24,000 florins had been paid to Rome for the pallium, the tippet of white wool which was the symbol of metropolitan dignity. If to these sums be added the *annates*, or first fruits, one year's income of the see, and other customary fees also payable to Rome on the election of an Archbishop, it will be easily understood that the diocese was unwilling, perhaps unable, to incur further expense. Joachim and his brother were equal to the occasion. They offered to bear the whole cost themselves; the ready money was borrowed from the Fuggers of Augsburg, the great financiers of the day, and Albert was elected Archbishop. The whole transaction, which does not appear to have excited any contemporary criticism, was crowned, when, four years later, in 1518, Leo X admitted the new Primate to the College of Cardinals.

Albert Dürer has left behind him two portraits of the Archbishop of Mainz; Lucas Cranach, or a painter who goes by his name, introduced him into a picture which still hangs in the church which he built at Halle; and his effigy is to be seen on one of the pillars which separate the choir from the north transept of his own cathedral. All these tell the same tale. An ignoble, though not an unkindly face, with sensual lips, and full double chin, a long, well-set nose, and above it eyes looking out with a kind of sad seriousness, unite to give the impression of a man who might have played a more dignified part in the world, had not dignity been so early thrust upon him. But it is quite plain that religious enthusiasm, or ascetic goodness, or any form of self-devotion are things with which he has no sympathy. When he came to Mainz, bringing with him as his minister Eitelwolf von Stein, who had been active in the foundation of the University of Frankfurt on the Oder, men thought that a new era for letters and art in the Rhineland was about to open; the young Archbishop's court was to be the place in which reviving humanism and the Church were to meet and be reconciled. Ulrich von Hutten, who had already knitted close relations with the "poets" at Erfurt, and was ready to take decisive part with Reuchlin, celebrated the arrival of the Archbishop in almost rapturous verse. Erasmus writes to him as an enlightened

and liberal patron of polite learning, and dedicates to him his little treatise, *On the Method of a true Theology*. There are even moments at which men are not quite sure whether the Primate has not some secret leaning to the new doctrines which Luther is beginning to teach; what a solution of all difficulties if the Primate of Germany, the Elector first in rank, should put himself at the head of the new movement of reform! But these expectations were based on a total misapprehension of Albert's character. A wise and liberal patron of letters he might have become, although, by some mischance, he never fulfilled the hopes of even the humanists; but it is impossible to conceive of him as fired by the passion for righteousness or the enthusiasm of humanity. And he was entangled in the net of circumstance. In one sense Luther's revolt was directed against him personally—not only as the Primate of Germany, but as the Papal agent for the indulgence. His only course was to remonstrate, to threaten, to repress; and if ever he thought of making terms with the Reformer, it was not till it was too late.[1]

The sale of indulgences was at this time a favourite method of raising money with the Papal Curia, and Germany was, for some reason, the best market. We have already noticed the enterprise of this kind connected with the Jubilee of 1500, of which Cardinal Raymond Perrand took charge, and which found its theologian in the Augustinian monk, John von Paltz. A year or two later Julius II adopted the same means to collect the funds required for the rebuilding of the Roman Basilica of St. Peter, a project which had been conceived by Nicholas V about the year 1450, but which had been suffered to sleep for more than half a century. But Leo X again took up the uncompleted work, which admirably fell in with his love of æsthetic display, and had recourse to the same source of revenue. Whether the money thus raised was all honestly appropriated to the declared object might be difficult to say; the rumour was bruited abroad that ecclesiastical revenues of this kind found their way, at least in part, into the pockets of the Pope's kinsfolk, and there is documentary evidence to

[1] May, *Kurfürst Albrecht II von Mainz u. Magdeburg*, vol. i. chaps. 1-5; *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. iii. p. 353 *et seq.*; *Erasmi Opp.* vol. v. p. 73.

show that 100,000 livres, which his nephew Lorenzo de Medici paid to the King of France, came out of the tithe which was contributed for the war against the Turks. But the purchasers of indulgences were told that they had nothing to do with the application of their cash; they got their full money's worth in spiritual privileges and immunities, and ought to be content. Germany was divided into three districts for the better vending of the indulgence. With two of these we have little to do; the administration of the third, which consisted of the dioceses of Mainz, Magdeburg, and Halberstadt, together with the Mark of Brandenburg, was committed to the Archbishop of Mainz and the Guardian of the Franciscan convent in the same city. The latter, according to one account, soon drew out of the transaction, leaving the Primate not only in sole command of his own district, but to the exercise of his great official and personal influence in favour of the indulgence in Germany at large. The traffic was to last for eight years; in the meantime the preaching of all other indulgences was to be suspended. The whole affair was a financial speculation, the character of which no one took the trouble to disguise. The proceeds were to be equally divided between Albert and the Pope. The share which fell to the former was to be applied to the payment of his debt to the Fuggers, who sent their clerks round with the preachers of the indulgence, furnished with duplicate keys to the chests in which the offerings of the faithful were collected. The mutual distrust of these purveyors of spiritual wares finds an apt commentary in the fact that their most notorious agent, Tetzel, was accused, on incontrovertible evidence, of having made a purse for himself. Whatever pains may be taken by modern apologists to deprive the theory of indulgences of its most repulsive features, it cannot be denied that the traffic, cynically undertaken and cynically conducted, was a too successful attempt to make money of men's fears and superstitions, and that it drew a peculiar baseness from the fact that it was authorised and carried into effect by the heads of the Church.[1]

The industry of antiquarians has collected many documents of various date to illustrate the practical application of the

[1] Ranke, vol. i. p. 236; Myconius, p. 18; Körner, *Tetzel*, p. 120.

doctrine of indulgences, but it will be desirable to confine our attention to the particular traffic which had such momentous results. The Archbishop, with his colleague, issued a "summary instruction" to the "Sub-Commissaries, Penitentiaries, and Confessors,"[1] who were entrusted with the duty of preaching the indulgence. In this they were enjoined to make much, in their sermons to the people, of "the very great authority of the Supreme Pontiff and Vicar of God, which is able to impart such graces and gifts, and how needful is the same to every man who wishes to attain to eternal life," to lay before them "the immeasurable and priceless advantage of the said apostolical indulgences," and to exhort them to visit diligently the stations or altars in the churches to which the indulgence is attached. The indulgence itself consists of four separate graces. "The first is the plenary remission of all sins . . . by which remission of sins, the penalties which a man must pay in purgatory for his offences against the Divine Majesty are most fully remitted, and the punishments of the said purgatory wholly wiped out." The second grace relates to confession. It gives the purchaser liberty to choose his own confessor, who shall have the power of absolving him, once in life, and in the article of death, even in cases otherwise reserved to the Apostolical see. The third grace is a share in the spiritual wealth of the universal Church, so that contributors, both for themselves and their deceased relations who have departed this life in charity, have their part in all prayers, petitions, alms, fasts, and pilgrimages. The fourth grace "is for souls actually in purgatory, namely, a plenary remission of all sins," which is to be bought by the freewill offerings of survivors. And this fourth grace has this further advantage, that while some formal expression of repentance, some perfunctory application to confession is necessary for the attainment of the other three, which are personal and not vicarious in their scope, it is a simple matter of purchase, unclogged by any religious conditions. Payment alone is necessary; remorse and confession are superfluous.

[1] The summary instruction is to be found in German in Walch, vol. xv. p. 371; in the original Latin in Gerdes, *Historia Evangelii Seculo XVI renovati*, vol. i., app. p. 83.

The pecuniary part of the matter is treated with business-like accuracy. It is enjoined upon the preachers of the indulgence that, after having expounded to their penitents the greatness of the grace conferred, they should put it to their consciences for what money or worldly goods they would be content to miss it. Royal personages, princes, prelates, were to pay twenty-five Rhenish gold gulden; abbots, canons, with counts, barons and their wives, ten. Other persons of the same kind, but of less distinction, whose annual income amounted to five hundred gold gulden, are charged six; while merchants and citizens, who have two hundred gold gulden a year, get the commodity for three. Provision, however, is made for still smaller contributions of a single, and even of half a gold gulden; while the section concludes with the words, "And let those who have no money supply the place of a contribution by prayer and fasting. For the Kingdom of Heaven ought not to be more open to the rich than to the poor." At the same time it is only too probable that in practice the rich had the preference. Myconius tells a story how, when a youth at Annaberg, where he was an inmate of the Franciscan convent, he in vain endeavoured to extract from Tetzel a letter of indulgence without payment. The indulgence-monger put his own interpretation on the words, "pauperibus gratis propter Deum," and felt that to give away such wares as his would be a fatal precedent.[1]

It is not easy to state the Catholic theory of indulgences in a shape that shall altogether escape criticism; for the Church has never authoritatively defined its doctrine on this point, and with the Counter-Reformation what was chiefly offensive in the way of practical abuse disappeared. At a time when rebellion had not yet raised its head, popes made large assertions of their power to forgive sins, which were afterwards ignored or withdrawn by more cautious theologians; while the doctrine was emphatically one which lent itself to sweeping and therefore inaccurate statement by popular preachers. The theory of indulgences connects itself with that of the Sacrament of Penance. This consists of three parts: Repentance, Confession, Satisfaction. The first of these, according to the

[1] *Melch. Adami Vitae Germanorum Theologorum*, p. 173; Körner, *Tetzel*, p. 27.

best expositors, is a truly spiritual emotion, a hatred of sin, springing not from fear of punishment, but from the love of God, coupled with a hearty resolve not to repeat the offence. It belongs to the external element, which according to the Catholic conception enters into every sacrament, that this should pass into confession to a duly ordained priest, and the acceptance at his hands of absolution. But the act of penance is not complete until it issues in satisfaction, which may either have a backward look, as in the case of the restitution of stolen property, or consist in the performance of certain penitential acts, imposed by the priest as conditions of restoration to church fellowship. These acts are not so much purely penal as educational, disciplinary, medicinal; they remind the sinner of his offence, and arm him with strength to resist temptation. But they have nothing to do with the greater satisfaction, once offered for all men upon the cross. In virtue of that sacrifice, the punishment of eternal death which waits upon sin is remitted as soon as the priest, upon due proof of repentance, has spoken the absolving word. These satisfactions are a part of the Church's disciplinary system; and she claims the right of mitigating or remitting penalties which she has herself imposed.

Such mitigation or remission is, primarily, what is known as an indulgence. It may accord with ecclesiastical notions of justice or expediency, or still more, it may serve the Church's purpose to lighten in specific cases the burthen of her own penalties. Such a power of partial or total remission is evidently involved in the idea of discipline. The particular penance appropriate to the sin was exchanged for the obligation to give alms, to go on crusade, to take up arms against the Turks, to contribute to some work of ecclesiastical utility, even to visit certain shrines, to engage in a prescribed round of devotion. The introduction of the pecuniary element into what was at first a religious transaction was partly due to the prevalent usage of the "Wehrgeld," or money compensation made to the injured, or the relatives of the slain. If an offence against man could be thus assessed in coin, why not one against God and the Church? But with the prevalence of this idea, that of ecclesiastical discipline more and more

faded away. It was not so much that a definite penance was annexed to a particular sin, as that by certain gifts or acts the penalties due to sin in general might be escaped. That a sinner, in any recognised way, acquired a thirty days' indulgence meant, that so much of the penal penance as he could perform in that time was remitted to him. But in the eyes of stricter theologians repentance and confession were always conditions precedent of indulgence; and its effect was confined to the remission of punishments over which the Church had jurisdiction.

But how far did the power of the Church extend? Not, at least in this shape, to opening or shutting the gates of eternal life; that belonged to the divine sacrifice of Christ. But as it was impossible for even the priest to say at what point the limit of a purely temporal satisfaction had been reached, there was, so to speak, no sharp dividing line between earthly penance and the purifying fires of purgatory. And did not the emphatic words, with which the keys were committed to Peter,[1] confer upon his successors the power of binding and loosing in heaven? In aid, then, of this extension of Papal power over purgatory came the scholastic doctrine of the heavenly treasure of the Church, first invented by Alexander Hales and Albert the Great, and moulded into logical symmetry by Thomas Aquinas. In Christ's sacrifice there was a large supererogatory element. He did far more than was necessary for the world's salvation. The same is true, in their degree, of Mary and the saints. And these supererogatory merits constitute a spiritual treasure, which the Church, as represented by the Pope, is able to apply to the benefit of the souls in purgatory. As to the method of that application, there were two theories; one that it was effected *vi& jurisdictionis*, that is to say, by the direct right conferred upon the Pope, by the words of Christ above alluded to; the other, and more generally held, that it was *per suffragium*, in virtue of a general intercession of the Church, to which God would not refuse to listen. But the fact was held to be certain, whatever the method; and the obvious result was that men believed it to be in the power of the Church to release a

[1] Matthew xvi. 19.

soul from purgatory, and thereby, indirectly, to open to it the gates of heaven.

From the administration of the theory of indulgences, involved in the above exposition, to their open sale is not a difficult transition. The words "sale" and "price," it would be urged by a Catholic apologist, import into the matter an invidious association; the alms of the faithful, contributed for an object in itself worthy, as, for instance, the rebuilding of St. Peter's Basilica, are really only a condition precedent of the spiritual benefits conferred; while the necessity of previous repentance, confession, satisfaction remains. But I have stated the theory in the shape which it has assumed since its suddenly developed disruptive force split the Church into fragments; before Luther, popes promised indulgences on large and easy terms, and theologians, zealous for the jurisdiction of the Church, vied with one another in widening the scope of doctrine. When Boniface VIII issued, in the year 1300, the bull announcing the first Jubilee, he offered the world in the most explicit terms, not a remission of penance, but a forgiveness of sins.[1] John von Paltz, the Augustinian monk of Erfurt, who preached the Jubilee of 1500 under the superintendence of Cardinal Raymond Perrand, declared that forgiveness of sins was the peculiar grace of Jubilee indulgences. It would be easy to adduce many authoritative documents in which, for popular purposes, the nature and effect of indulgences are spoken of in a way quite inconsistent with the strictness of scholastic theory. What this doctrine became in the hands of preachers who were more solicitous to collect money than to keep within orthodox lines, or to work for moral reformation, we shall see before long; but apart from actual abuse, it is clear that from possible abuse no caution on the part of Church authorities could save it. The distinctions involved were too fine for popular apprehension. What did the ignorant peasant who bought his "Ablassbrief" know of the difference between guilt and penalty, between punishment

[1] Nos, de omnipotentis Dei misericordia et eorundem Apostolorum ejus meritis et auctoritate confisi, . . . vere poenitentibus et confessis, vel qui vere poenitebunt et confitebuntur . . . non solum plenam sed largiorem, immo plenissimam omnium suorum concedimus veniam peccatorum. Gieseler, vol. ii. pt. 2, p. 499 *note*.

on this side the grave, and on the other? What he thought he was buying was forgiveness of his past sins, and at the same time liberty to commit more. What else should he think, when he was earnestly exhorted to purchase the ransom of the souls of his dead from purgatory by the expenditure of a little money, to which it was not necessary to add any contrition of his own? Whatever spiritual element there had at first been in the transaction soon faded out of it: attrition, the mere fear of punishment, was substituted for contrition, which involves the love of God: soon even attrition was taken for granted, and the magic documents were sold indiscriminately to all comers. It was impossible that it should not be so. The doctrine was one that, even if it had been far more carefully limited by theologians than was the case, must have been apprehended by the people in a crude and superstitious sense. On the other hand, no one can deny that the sale of indulgences was at Rome simply regarded as a permitted expedient of Papal finance, and took its place among other methods by which the fears and superstitions of men were made to contribute to the needs of the Church. Nor was it to be wondered at that a generation, which rebelled in vain against first fruits and reservations and the abuse of patronage and the open sale of benefices, should find indulgences a more unspiritual exaction than all the rest. Presently, it is true, a bold spirit here and there began to ask why, if the Pope could release souls from purgatory for a consideration, he did not, in the plenitude of his power, empty the place of torment, out of pure humanity? But the mass of the people believed and bought, and the traffic went merrily on.[1]

The man whose name is inseparably connected with the promulgation of the Indulgence of 1517 in North Germany is John Tetzel. His reputation suffered shipwreck in the storm which Luther raised, and he was tacitly abandoned by the authorities of the Church, which he had striven to serve in his own way, believing that it was hers too. Even while he

[1] Möhler, *Symbolik*, vol. i. p. 281 *seq.*; *Neue Untersuchungen* (*Vertheidigung der Symbolik*), p. 301 *seq.*; *Canones et Decreta Concilii Tridentini*, sess. xxi. c. ix. p. 115, sess. xxv. c. xxi. p. 204. Hase, *Handbuch der Prot. Polemik*, p. 387 *seq.*; conf. *Luther's XCV Thesen und ihre dogmenhistorischen Voraussetzungen*, v. Bratke. For Paltz's theory, Kolde, *Staupitz*, p. 174 *seq.*

lived, stories which contained an element of legend gathered round his name, until at last, in the minds of uncritical Protestant historians, he became the typical indulgence-monger, upon whom any well-worn anecdote might be fathered. Of late, when Catholic Germany has made vigorous efforts to discredit what it calls the Luther legend, Tetzel has been rehabilitated as uncritically as he had formerly been assailed; and we are gravely assured by a recent biographer, that with a little less piety and humility he might have been a Luther, or, transplanted to Italian soil and the turmoil of Florence, a Savonarola.[1] The facts of the case, however, lie upon the surface, and the historian, whose judgment is not warped by dogmatic prepossession, has little difficulty in forming a clear conception of the man. He was a native of Leipzig, born probably early in the second half of the fifteenth century, and educated, not without credit to himself, at the university of his native town. Such learning as he had appears to have been of the old-fashioned kind; no breath of the new scholarship, so far as we know, passed over him. His natural aptitudes, which were those of a popular preacher, took him into the Dominican order; and from the beginning of the century we find him everywhere busy as a preacher of indulgences. His first appearance in that capacity was in connection with the Jubilee indulgence of 1500; next we find him recommending an indulgence which Julius II had proclaimed for the benefit of the Teutonic Knights in Prussia, then hard pressed by Sclavonic foes. From that time his destiny was fixed. He was a recognised agent for this kind of clerical work, and we do not hear of him in connection with any other. In 1508-1509 he is preaching in the Church of St. Peter at Görlitz, collecting money to cover it with a copper roof. In 1510 he sells indulgences and "Butterbriefe"—Papal permissions to eat butter on fast days—for the benefit of a bridge over the Elbe at Torgau. Everywhere successful, he gained the same kind of reputation as is enjoyed in some Protestant churches by a preacher of charity sermons whose eloquence is affirmed by large collections. And as Saxony and the country round about had been the scene of his triumphs, it was quite

[1] Gröne, *Tetzel und Luther*, p. 4.

natural that the Archbishop of Mainz should choose him as the agent for the indulgence which was at once to rebuild the Basilica of St. Peter and to reimburse the Fuggers.

Myconius, who in these years was a Franciscan monk at Annaberg, and saw what he described, gives a lively picture of the ceremonial observed in the first promulgation of an indulgence—a ceremonial which is believed to owe its form to Cardinal Raymond Perrand.[1] "So highly honoured," he says, "was the indulgence, that when the Commissary was brought into a town, the Bull was borne aloft on a velvet or golden cushion, and all priests, monks, councillors, schoolmasters, scholars, men, women, virgins, and children marched in procession with banners and tapers and singing. Then all bells were rung, all organs played; the Commissary was escorted to the churches, a red cross set up in the midst, and the Pope's banner displayed: *summa*, God Himself could not be better received, or held in greater honour." It often happened that advantage was taken of saints' days and church festivals, so that people, streaming together, half for amusement, half for devotion, found the indulgence preacher at work in the midst of the fair. For this rough work Tetzel was admirably fitted. He had a commanding person, a sonorous voice, a ready tongue; and if the nature of his occupation gave no opportunity for the display of finer qualities, he could at least bring home his lesson to the hearts of his audience, and wile the money from their pockets. There is no proof that he aimed at anything higher. No man could preach indulgences for seventeen years in North-Eastern Germany at the beginning of the sixteenth century and keep much fineness of spiritual touch. Either the work must drag the preacher down to its own level, or the preacher forsake the work in unspeakable disgust. Such undoubted fragments of Tetzel's preaching as have descended to us answer to this estimate of his powers and temptations. He accepted the theory of indulgences in all good faith, and, with the instincts of a man who rejoiced in his ability to sway a great audience at his will, only too probably fell into the snare of adapting his statement of it to their coarse and crude conceptions.[2]

[1] Myconius, p. 15.

[2] See Note A, p. 256, *infra*.

The traffic in indulgences seems first to have attracted Luther's attention in the summer of 1516. A sermon on the subject, which he preached on the Tenth Sunday after Trinity in that year, is still extant; and he returned to the attack in another, which, dated on "the day before the dedication" of the Castle Church, must be assigned to the 31st of October. A third allusion to the topic, which was evidently filling his mind more and more, occurs in a sermon preached on St. Matthias' Day, February 24, 1517. All these show a somewhat doubtful and perplexed state of mind. He does not deny the value of indulgences or the right of the Pope to issue them; but he cannot bring them, especially as he hears they are being preached, into accord with the spiritual theory of salvation to which he had worked his own way. Meanwhile Tetzel was drawing closer to the confines of Saxony, and strange things came to Luther's ears. Burghers of Wittenberg went to Zerbst or Jüterbogk to buy these religious wares, and, coming back, advanced their letter of indulgence against his authority in the confessional. Rumour, true or false, brought startling echoes of Tetzel's preaching; he had declared that if any one had sinned in the grossest way against the Mother of God, forgiveness was to be bought at a price; he had set himself up against St. Peter, saying that he had delivered more souls with the indulgence than the Apostle with his preaching; he had asserted that the red cross of the indulgence, with the Pope's arms, erected in the churches, was as powerful as the Cross of Christ; he had told the people that when money was paid into the chest for the release of a soul in purgatory it mounted upwards to heaven so soon as the coin rang upon the bottom. There may have been an element of exaggeration in all this; such stories commonly lose nothing in the telling; but men talked of them and believed them, and Luther shared their belief. By friends and strangers, in conversation and in writing, he was asked his opinion of these strange novelties, and found when he held his peace that hot and bitter words were spoken of the authority of the Papal chair. "No one," he said, "would bell the cat." Tetzel was a Dominican, and the Dominicans wielded the terrible power of the Inquisition. He himself was "but a young Doctor, just out of the smithy, eager

and lusty in Holy Scripture," and he had already run the risk of ill-will from the Elector by preaching against the indulgences, which attracted men to the church which he had founded and enriched with so many relics. So the advantage of silence and the necessity of speech contended together in his mind till, while he was musing, the fire burned, and at last he spake with his tongue. The 1st of November, All Saints' Day, was that of the dedication of the Castle Church, on which its treasures were wont to be displayed to the faithful, and its indulgences were chiefly to be earned. But the door of the church was also the "blackboard" of the University, on which all notices of disputations and other high academic functions were displayed. Hither, then, went Luther, accompanied by John Agricola, on the afternoon of the 31st October 1517, and nailed to the door his Ninety-five Theses. We need not wonder that, interpreted by subsequent events, this bold act made a deep impression upon the imagination of the sole witness of it; long afterwards Agricola was wont to speak of the little "half sheet of paper" which so shook the world.[1]

The form which Luther's action took was strictly academic; nor, as we have seen, were these Theses the first that he had propounded. Such disputations were regarded in the universities of the Middle Ages partly as recognised means of defining and elucidating truth, partly as a kind of mental gymnastic, apt to train and quicken the faculties of the disputants. It was not understood that a man was always ready to adopt in sober earnest propositions which he was willing to defend in the academic arena; and in like manner, a rising disputant might attack orthodox positions without endangering his reputation for orthodoxy. At the same time, the element of serious conviction involved in formal disputation varied greatly; and such an encounter as that in 1519, between Eck on the one hand, Luther and Carlstadt on the other, was no mimic fight, but a duel to the death. How serious the announcement of this disputation was (though in fact no disputants appeared), may be inferred from the terms in which it

[1] Weimar ed. vol. i. pp. 66, 94, 138; Erl. D. S. vol. xxvi. p. 69 (*Wider Hans Wurst*); Myconius, p. 21; De W. vol. i. p. 113; Kawerau, *Joh. Agricola*, p. 16; Förstemann, *Neues Urkundenbuch*, p. 301; *Corp. Ref.* vol. xxv. p. 777.

was made. "For love and desire of elucidating the truth, these following Theses will be disputed at Wittenberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father, Martin Luther, Master of Arts and Doctor of Theology, and Ordinary Lecturer on the same, in that place. Wherefore he asks, that whosoever cannot verbally and in presence debate with us should, absent, do the same in writing. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen." And the form of Luther's action accurately represented the state of his mind. The Church, he said, in effect, to his diocesan, Scultetus, Bishop of Brandenburg, had put forth no authoritative doctrine of indulgences, and the subject was therefore legitimately open to disputation. "These," he wrote in his first letter to Leo X, "are disputations, not doctrines, not dogmas; and, in accordance with custom, put somewhat obscurely and enigmatically." He was quite convinced that he had only to bring the excesses of the indulgence-mongers under the notice of the proper authorities to have them condemned. He was the furthest possible from charging upon the doctrine or practice of the Church the scandals of Tetzel's preaching and traffic. Nor indeed did he imagine that the blows of his hammer would echo far beyond the quiet precincts of the church and university of Wittenberg. Early in 1518 he writes to Scheurl, who had expressed astonishment that the Theses had not been sent to a friend like himself, that he had not intended to make them known outside a limited circle of friends and neighbours. To Lang, at Erfurt, they were indeed sent on the 11th of November, with the characteristic words, "If the work be of God, who shall hinder it? If not of God, who shall further it? Not my will, nor theirs, nor ours, but thine be done, Holy Father, which art in heaven, Amen." But it was impossible that the fire once kindled should not spread; in a fortnight the Theses had run through all Germany, in a month through all Christendom, "as if," says Myconius, "the angels had been the messengers."[1]

This momentous step was not taken without due notice given to the authorities of the Church. In the letter which Luther wrote to Leo X on the 30th of May 1518, he says

[1] Weimar ed. vol. 1, p. 233; Erl. *Wurst*); Myconius, p. 23; De W. D. S. vol. xxvi. p. 71 (*Wider Hans* vol. i. pp. 73, 95, 113, 121.

that he had previously warned some "great ones" of what he was about to do, being kindly received by some and laughed at by others; while Myconius reports that he wrote to four bishops, those, namely, of Meissen, Frankfurt, Zeitz, and Merseburg. Luther's own more precise account is that he wrote to his own diocesan, the Bishop of Brandenburg, "in whom," he says, "he had a very gracious bishop," and to the Elector Archbishop, in whose name the traffic in indulgences was being carried on. Of these letters, only that to the Primate is now extant, and its date "Vigil of All Saints, 1517," bespeaks for it the character of a solemn declaration of the writer's feeling and conviction. It is humble, some critics have thought almost abject in tone; though perhaps not more so than might be expected, when it is remembered that the writer was a little-known monk, "a peasant, and a peasant's son," and the receiver, not only Primate of Germany, Elector and Archchancellor of the Empire, but by birth a member of a reigning house. But this only brings out into stronger contrast the clearness with which Luther states, and the firmness with which he defends his position. It is, he says, in the exercise of the loyalty which he owes to the Archbishop that he speaks. Then, having told the tale of the strange and horrible things which Tetzel was alleged to have preached, he breaks out: "Good God, thus are the souls entrusted to your charge, most excellent Father, instructed unto death!" He could be silent no longer. No gift that a bishop has to dispense can make a man secure of salvation. The Apostle enjoins upon us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and the just shall hardly be saved. Indulgences can do nothing for men's souls in the way of salvation or holiness, but only remit external penalties, such as were formerly canonically imposed. Works of piety and charity are infinitely better than indulgences, yet these elbow those out of the way, "although it is the chief and only office of bishops that the people should learn the gospel and charity of Christ. How great therefore is the horror, how great the danger of a bishop, if, with a silent gospel, he suffers only the noise of indulgences among his people, and cares for them more than for the gospel?" Then, by this time emboldened by the righteous indignation which had

possessed him, he ventures to impugn the Instruction which the Archbishop had given to his Commissaries, although he is careful to say that, while issued in his name, it cannot have been with his knowledge and consent. And finally, after imploring the Archbishop to restrain the excesses of the preachers, "lest some one should arise to confute both preachers and instruction, to the deepest reproach of your most Illustrious Sublimity—a thing which I should vehemently regret to see done, yet which I fear will be done, unless measures be promptly taken,"—he asks him to look at his Theses, in order that he may see how undefined and uncertain a thing is that doctrine of Indulgences, of which the preachers dream as absolutely fixed and sure.[1]

No answer was given to this letter. In the eyes of the Elector Archbishop, the professions of submissive humility with which it began would count for nothing against the offence committed in the earnest and lofty rebuke into which its concluding sentences rose. We know, however, what Albert thought of it, and to what action it roused him, from a document under his own hand. He had entrusted the administration of his northern dioceses of Magdeburg and Halberstadt to a council, composed of members of both chapters, which sat at Halle, and this body had hastened to inform him of the action of "the audacious monk at Wittenberg," sending him at the same time the documents of the case. In a long letter, dated at Aschaffenburg on the 13th of December, the Archbishop acknowledges the receipt of their report, and tells them, first, that he has referred the matter to the University of Mainz for its advice; next, that he has instituted a process of inhibition against Luther; and thirdly, that he has sent all the papers to Rome for the judgment and action of the Holy See. These steps are to be made known to Luther by Tetzel, as the Archbishop's Commissary, whom at the same time he further appoints to preach the indulgence in Prussia and the Mark of

[1] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. i. p. 16; D. S. vol. xxvi. p. 71 (*Wider Hans Wurst*); De W. vol. i. pp. 67, 120; Myconius, p. 22. Cardinal Sadolet (quoted by Janssen, vol. ii. p. 76 *note*) says of the indulgences in question, "Quas ego indulgentias atque adeo potius indulgentiarum illarum ministros neque nunc defendo, et tunc cum decretae illae atque publicatae sunt, recordor me contradixisse."

Brandenburg. So far, then, he seems to take Tetzel and his past conduct unreservedly under his episcopal protection. But he goes on to mention and approve a complaint which has been made by Rome of the expense which Tetzel and his subordinates have incurred—their pay alone amounting to upwards of 300 gulden a month—and lays upon them his strongest commands to lessen it; while at the same time he blames the sub-commissaries for having indulged, both in preaching and in the inns which they frequented, in unseemly speech and behaviour, "to the injury of the holy business." With some directions as to the opening of the boxes, and the rendering of a strict account of their contents to himself, this singular letter ends. The Archbishop tacitly admits that there is some ground for Luther's complaints, but he does not on that account intend to put an end to a lucrative traffic. On the contrary, he contents himself with a rebuke, directly of Tetzel's subordinates, indirectly of Tetzel himself, and proposes to extend the trade into Prussia and the Mark. Still this lofty indifference to Luther's remonstrance is only half real; his reference of it to the Pope shows at once that it has touched him to the quick, and that, great prelate as he is, he is anxious to transfer the responsibility of dealing with it to stronger hands than his own.[1]

The Ninety-five Theses are so important a document in the history of the Reformation as to tempt the critic to see in them a larger and more definite element of ecclesiastical and theological revolt than they really contain. The seed of rebellion is indeed there; but there is no prevision in Luther's mind of what it may grow to. As we have already seen, the result of his long and bitter struggle in the cell at Erfurt had been a thoroughly spiritual conception of salvation, which, if as yet theologically indefinite, commanded his entire mental adhesion, and had gained complete possession of his soul. His years of quiet teaching at Wittenberg had only confirmed this conviction, negatively, his revolt against Aristotle and the Schoolmen, positively. The influence of the *Theologia Germanica* had worked in the same direction. But although this belief was vital to him, and, as the event proved, too strong for his allegiance to the

[1] Körner, *Tetzel*, p. 148.

Church when the two came into decisive collision, he had not yet realised the fact that he could not hold it and still be a loyal and submissive Catholic. So far as we know, he had incurred no suspicion of heresy. He held high office in his order, and held it acceptably. He had not said or done anything to forfeit the confidence of Staupitz. He taught and preached at Wittenberg under the protection of a Prince whose reputation for orthodox piety stood high. Even now the point of difference with the Church, which Tetzel's preaching revealed to him, was not in regard to the theory of justification, or any other matter of defined doctrine as to which he might be called upon to submit himself to the voice of authority. The controversy went deeper than any dogma, how fundamental soever; for it was between a profoundly spiritual and a coarsely material conception of religion. A man who had fought his way to the thought that the essential thing was a strong spiritual affection, filling and transforming the whole nature—that without this, nothing else availed, that with this, nothing else was necessary, could not but be impatient with the rough and common machinery both of the theory and the practice of the indulgence-mongers. Still he lays the blame on Tetzel and his tribe. He takes advantage of the fact that the Church has authoritatively laid down no doctrine of indulgences, to acquit the Archbishop and the Pope. He is sure that he has only to put the matter in the right light, to secure the suppression of the abuse. But whether this is so, or not, he must speak. Unconsciously, perhaps, to himself, his loyalty to the truth is stronger than his loyalty to the Church, and he cannot, silently and without protest, see the Gospel degraded and dragged in the mire.

It answers to this that the Theses do not, in strict logical order, and with due subordination of parts, state and defend a theory. They strike the reader as having been thrown together, somewhat in haste, and in obedience to an overmastering moral impulse, rather than as the outcome of carefully digested thought, and deliberate theological intention. Two currents of feeling, not always in complete accord, run through them; now of righteous wrath at the depravation of spiritual religion implied in the indulgence preaching, and

again of unwillingness to be cut off from Papal authority, if only duly limited and rightly exercised. And as these currents meet and mingle, not without some opposition and commotion, we seem to see the tides of passionate conviction in Luther's soul ebb and flow, bearing him at one moment into the audacity of rebellion, and at the next, carrying him back into the obedience of conformity. For instance, the 1st Thesis begins by declaring, that in the intention of Christ, the whole life of the faithful disciple was to be an act of repentance: the 4th lays down, that punishment remains so long as hatred of one's self remains: the 5th sets the axe to the root of indulgences, by asserting that the Pope neither can nor will remit any punishments, save such as he has imposed by his own will or in accordance with the Canons: the 6th limits the power of the Pope in remitting guilt to the declaration and approval of the fact that it has been remitted by God. But the tide turns with the 7th: "God forgives no man his sins without in all things subjecting him to His priestly Vicar." It is, however, only fair to say that the theses which can be interpreted into even a partial recognition of Papal power in the remission of penalties and the forgiveness of sins, are much less numerous and much less sharply expressed than those which impugn it. And even of these, most seem to contemplate an ideal Pontiff, who, Luther chooses to assume, would think and act only as a wise and good Pope should. On the other hand, such propositions as the following are absolutely destructive of ceremonial religion. Thesis 23: "If remission of all penalties of every kind can be given to any, it certainly can only be to the very perfect, that is, to the very few." Thesis 30: "No one is sure of the reality of his own contrition, much less of his having attained full forgiveness." Thesis 31: "As rare as the true penitent is the man who truly obtains indulgence, that is, very rare indeed." Thesis 36: "Every Christian who is truly repentant has a plenary remission of punishment and guilt due to him, even without letters of pardon." Thesis 37: "Every true Christian, living or dead, has from God a full share of all the wealth of Christ and the Church, even without letters of pardon." Thesis 39: "It is very difficult for even the most learned theologians

at the same time publicly to extol the amplitude of pardons and the reality of contrition." And yet, with a sudden return of feeling, such as we have before seen, the 38th Thesis runs: "The remission and participation of the Pope is in no wise to be despised, since, as I have said, it is the declaration of the divine remission."

The series of propositions from the 42d onwards are very trenchant in their contrast of the material with the spiritual. Thesis 42: "Christians are to be taught that it is not the mind of the Pope, that buying of pardons is in any way to be compared with works of mercy." Thesis 43: "Christians are to be taught that whoever gives to the poor, or lends to the needy, has done better than if he had bought pardons." Thesis 44: "Because by the work of charity, charity is increased, and the man becomes better; but by pardons, he does not become better, but only freer from punishment." Thesis 45: "Christians are to be taught that whoever, having seen a poor man and passed him by, gives money for pardons, acquires for himself not the indulgences of the Pope, but the indignation of God." Thesis 47: "Christians are to be taught that buying of pardons is free, not prescribed." Thesis 48: "Christians are to be taught that, in giving of pardons, the Pope desires more, as he needs more, their pious prayers for himself than their ready money." Thesis 49: "Christians are to be taught that the pardons of the Pope are useful if they do not put their trust in them, but most hurtful if thereby they lose the fear of God." Thesis 50: "Christians are to be taught that if the Pope knew of the exactions of the preachers of indulgences, he would choose that the Basilica of St. Peter should lie in ashes, rather than be built up of the skin, the flesh, and the bones of his sheep." Other and later propositions go still farther in rebellion. The 82d Thesis asks why the Pope, who can release souls from purgatory for money, does not, for very charity, and the supreme necessity of souls, empty the place of fiery trial; the 86th, accusing the Pope of being richer than the richest Crœsus, why he does not build a Basilica for St. Peter out of his own money rather than that of the faithful poor? With questions like these, it is difficult to reconcile any formal profession of allegiance to a supreme Pontiff, either actual or ideal.

The Ninety-five Theses are not, therefore, a manifesto of the Reformation as it was destined to be. The word faith does not occur in them. They make no appeal to the authority of Scripture, as opposed and superior to that of the Church or the Pope. Their attack upon sacerdotal religion is only feeble and indirect. At the same time they breathe the spirit of the coming change, if they do little to anticipate its form. Not only are they a public declaration of rebellion more decisive than any that had been made for centuries past, but they are the protest, even if somewhat inarticulate and confused, of spiritual insight. Here is one who has clearly discerned that reconciliation with God is an inward personal process, consummated in the strength of a divine affection, and therefore essentially independent alike of human intervention and ecclesiastical forms. He has not yet, it is true, worked his thought clear, else he would see that the possibility of placing the soul face to face with God, and interfusing it with a divine strength, carries with it the needlessness of priests and sacraments and an authoritative Church. But the great antithesis, which it was Luther's life work to present to the world, between a religion which clothes itself in sacramental forms and a religion which casts them aside, already lies half hidden, half expressed, in these Theses.

As to the reception in Wittenberg of Luther's audacious act, we are largely left to scattered hints and indications. He himself was in a strangely mixed mood. Writing to Staupitz in May 1518, he speaks of himself as a lover of retirement, one who was more willingly a spectator of the great game of human affairs than an actor in it, a man, infirm in health, whom his enemies by force or fraud could deprive of only a few hours' life. Who was he, he said many years afterwards, a wretched despised monk, more like a corpse than a man, that he should set himself up against the Pope's majesty? Desire of fame did not move him; God, in answer to his prayers, had wonderfully set him free from ambition; so that he relied not on himself, but on the goodness of his cause, and the Word of God. But whatever his reluctance to descend into the arena, the step once taken, he was serene and joyful. At a later time he told the story, how the Prior and Sub-Prior of his

convent came to him, moved by the growing clamour, and begged him not to put his order to shame. The affair of the Dominicans, burned at Bern in 1509 for inventing miracles to disprove the Immaculate Conception of Mary, was still fresh in men's memories; the same powerful order had just suffered defeat at the hands of Reuchlin and the humanists; what more likely than that they should avenge themselves, and "it be the turn of the Augustinians to burn?" To which Luther answered, "Dear Fathers, if the matter is not begun in God's name it will soon fall to the ground, but if it is, let Him take charge of it." It must have been about this time that, riding to Kemberg with his colleague the jurist Hieronymus Schurf, he was asked by his companion, "What are you about in writing against the Pope? It will not be borne," and answered, in the true heroic tone, "What if it *must* be borne?" His theological friends at Wittenberg, Carlstadt, Amsdorf, and the rest, came only gradually to his side, being divided, probably at first between uneasy astonishment at his boldness and the habit of submission to his intellectual ascendency. They had accepted his theory of grace and works, and, a little more slowly than himself, were beginning to discern to what decisiveness of revolt against the Church it might lead them. The Elector already appears in that attitude of benevolent neutrality from which he never wholly departed. He cannot have regarded with satisfaction what was virtually an attack, not only upon his own cherished convictions, but upon his favourite foundation: but he makes no sign; and on the other hand, Luther is anxious to have it widely known that Frederick has not been cognisant of his onslaught on the authority of the Archbishop. In the theological world outside, much loudly-expressed astonishment and contempt divided men's minds with scant sympathy. Mathesius tells the story of a Dr. Fleck, a monk of Steinlausig, near Bitterfeld, who, when he read the Theses, cried out for joy, "Ho, ho, he is come for whom we have waited; he will do it," and thereupon wrote a letter of encouragement to Luther. Not all friends, however, were equally confident. A pendant to this is the anecdote of one Albert Cranz of Hamburg, who said on the same occasion, "Thou speakest the truth, good brother, but thou wilt effect

nothing: go, therefore, into thy cell and pray, 'Lord, have mercy upon me.'" Each mood is true to facts of human nature; but it is in the former, which was happily Luther's, that victories of reform are won.[1]

It was not to be expected that Tetzel should sit quietly down under Luther's attack. The force of the onslaught may be measured by the fact that for the time at least it put an end to the Dominican's activity in the sale of indulgences. In December 1517 we hear of him at Halle, where he procures certificates, still extant, from both lay and ecclesiastical authorities, to prove that in that city at least he had not uttered the revolting proposition as to the Virgin, ascribed to him by common report. Thence, apparently supposing that only as a Doctor of Theology he could adequately answer Luther, he went to Frankfurt on the Oder for the purpose of taking that degree. The university of that city, which had been founded in 1506 as a centre of the new learning, had fallen altogether into Dominican hands, and was in the north of Germany, as Köln in the west, a seat of reaction. One of its leading teachers was Conrad Wimpina, a stout representative of the scholastic method, who at Leipzig had already been Tetzel's teacher. Under Wimpina's inspiration, many said with his help, Tetzel prepared a series of 106 Antitheses, followed by a second set of 50, in which he took the field of disputation against Luther. The first of these appeared in print at the end of the year, when Tetzel made the first step towards the coveted degree; on the 20th of January 1518 a great assembly of 300 Dominican monks was held; on the 21st the 156 Theses were offered for disputation, and Tetzel solemnly declared Doctor of Theology. The dialectic encounter was in this case not a mere friendly tournament: a real opponent presented himself in the person of John Knipstrow, a young Franciscan monk who, for learning's sake, had come to the university from his Silesian monastery, and now vehemently defended the cause of Luther. With him, however,

[1] Erl. D. S. vol. xli. p. 37 (*Auslegung des 118. Psalms*); vol. xxvi. p. 71 (*Wider Hans Wurst*); *Opp. Lat.* vol. iii. p. 280 (*Enarrationes in Genesin*); vol. xx. p. 91 (*Enarratio Psalmi* 127.); Walch, vol. xiv. p. 470; De W. vol. i. pp. 76, 108, 118; *T. T.* vol. ii. p. 421; Lauterbach, p. 18; Mathesius, p. 13 A; Tentzel, vol. i. p. 269; Löscher, vol. ii. p. 3.

short work was made, as might be expected where 300 Dominicans were got together; he was sent to the monastery of Piritz in Pomerania to digest his difficulties as best he could. It is pleasant to be able to add that a few years afterwards he emerged into light, and died at last General Superintendent of the district of Wolgast.[1]

Recent apologists are anxious to make out that both the 106 and the 50 Theses were Tetzel's own, and that the common belief, which Luther shared, that Wimpina had been their real author, was unfounded. It is a matter of very little moment; such assistance as Wimpina may have given Tetzel was a common academical incident, held to reflect no shame on the receiver; of the "Declarations" by Melanchthon, so many of which are still extant, nearly all were written to be delivered by others on occasions of university solemnity; and if it is true that Wimpina afterwards printed the Antitheses in a work of his own without mentioning Tetzel's name, we may take it as a further proof that authorship in such cases was a very indefinite thing. But in truth the Antitheses do not shed much lustre upon any one. The 106 refer to the Theory of Indulgences; the 50 lay down the doctrine of the Papal Supremacy in the crudest and most uncompromising form. There is a certain rude force in the latter; their author is troubled by no scruples as to the rights and liberties of the Church, which he delivers bound hand and foot to the dictation of the Sovereign Pontiff. But the 106 on Indulgences are a very feeble and futile document compared with the 95 against which they were directed, and quite miss all the deeper moral and religious issues of the dispute. Luther took no notice of either. Some time in March, however, a man came over from Halle to Wittenberg bringing a large supply of Tetzel's theses, and offering them publicly for sale. The students gathered eagerly round, bought a few, then forcibly took the rest from the terrified hawker, and, after having invited the whole university to the funeral pyre, burned them in the market-place. We may suppose that Luther was

[1] Seidemann, *Erläuterungen*, p. 1; Löscher, vol. i. p. 504; vol. ii. p. 7; Seckendorf, lib. iii. sec. 15, p. 139. Tetzel's two sets of Theses may be found at length in Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. i. p. 294 *et seq.*

secretly not displeased with the generous indiscretion of his youthful adherents; but he was anxious to clear himself and the authorities of the university of any complicity with the deed, and made it the subject of grave admonitions from the pulpit.[1]

During the winter months of 1517-1518 Luther abated nothing of his literary activity. He followed up his Theses with a sermon, "Of Indulgence and Grace," in which, under twenty heads, probably amplified in oral delivery, he expounded their doctrine in the vernacular to the people. It is not improbable that the MS. of this sermon was sent, with the Theses, to the Archbishop of Mainz, but it did not appear in print till February or March 1518.[2] One or two other sermons of the same period still remain, showing that, careless of the clamour that was rising outside, he persevered in the exposition of the theological ideas that were more and more taking possession of him. He published a short explanation of the 110th Psalm, and furnished a preface to an edition, by Carlstadt, of Augustine's *De Spiritu et Litera*. He was engaged on an elaborate statement and defence of the position taken up in the Theses, which was to be his justification in the eyes of the Church. But he was not thinking of rebellion. He had had a kind reply to his first letter to his ordinary, the Bishop of Brandenburg, who bade him beware how he dashed himself against Holy Church: now, probably in February 1518, he sent him, with a second letter, a copy of the yet

[1] Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 277; *Resolutiones, ibid.* vol. i. p. 532; De W. vol. i. pp. 98, 99, 109; Löscher, vol. i. p. 504. The story that Tetzel had already burned the Ninety-five Theses at Jüterbogk, or elsewhere, though it was generally believed, and has no element of improbability in it, rests on no certain evidence.

[2] Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 239. The Archbishop of Mainz, in the letter to his council at Halle above mentioned, says, "Wir haben eur schreyben mit zugesandten tractat und conclusion eins vermessnen Monichs zew Wittenberg das heylig negotium Indulgenciarum und unsern Subcommissarien betreffend Inhalts horen lessen." The "conclusion" is plainly the Ninety-five Theses; the "tractat" may very well be the "Sermon von Ablass und Gnade," although there seems to be sufficient proof that it was not published till the middle of February 1518. If so, it can only have been communicated to the Archbishop in MS. Luther's own words, in the Latin preface to the first volume of his collected works (1545), are "Mox scripsi epistolas duas, alteram ad Moguntinensem archiepiscopum Albertum. . . . Ego contemptus edidi Disputationis schedulam simul et germanicam concionem de indulgentiis, paulo post etiam Resolutiones." Körner, *Tetzel*, p. 148; Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. i. pp. 16, 17.

unpublished *Resolutiones*, submitting it to his episcopal censure. The answer was brought by a dignified churchman, the Abbot of Lehnin, who was also the bearer of a request from the bishop, that Luther would for a time postpone the publication of the book, and meanwhile would not sell the German sermon. To this request the Reformer, touched by the condescension of the bishop, gave a ready assent, and all further action was for a time deferred. But the inward fire was still burning, and the more Luther meditated on indulgences the more difficult of reconciliation with spiritual religion did he find them. In the public eye it was necessary to walk with caution; but, writing to Spalatin on the 15th February, he reveals his whole mind. He can see nothing in indulgences but a deluding of souls; they are utterly useless, except to snorers and slothful in the way of Christ. Compared with the exercise of charity, they are naught; he cannot doubt that one who passes by a poor man to buy them deserves the anger of God.[1]

These occupations were broken in upon by a journey to Heidelberg, which Luther undertook in the months of April and May. The occasion was the triennial assembly of the Augustinian Congregation, held for the election of officers and the transaction of other necessary business. Some of Luther's friends doubted whether he ought to go; the indulgence-mongers were breathing out threats against him, talking of lighting a heretic's faggot within a month; nor did Luther himself, who relied upon the offered protection of the Elector, and had made up his mind to go to Heidelberg in any case, think that these menaces were altogether idle words. Frederick's permission for the journey was given in a letter to Staupitz, which shows how highly he esteemed his Professor, and how unwilling he was that he should be long detained from his work at Wittenberg; and when on the 11th of April Luther set out, it was in company of an escort provided by the Elector, and furnished with a strongly-worded letter of com-

[1] Weimar ed. vol. i. pp. 266, 317, 325, 335, 687; Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vii. p. 488; *T. T.* vol. ii. p. 367, vol. iii. p. 315; De W. vol. i. pp. 89, 71 (to Spalatin, wrongly dated Nov. 1517, *vide* Enders, *Luther's Briefwechsel*, vol. i. p. 177); conf. vol. i. pp. 92, 96.

mendation.[1] The first part of the toilsome road, as far as Coburg, he accomplished on foot: "a sin," he pleasantly writes to Spalatin, "which, inasmuch as his contrition is perfect, and a most ample satisfaction has been imposed upon him, needs no remission of indulgences." From Coburg he made his way to Würzburg, where he was most hospitably received by the Bishop, Lorenz von Bibra, a prelate, who, if he had not died in the subsequent year, might, men thought, have publicly associated himself with the cause of reform.[2] Here, however, he met John Lang, the Prior of his old convent at Erfurt, and other brethren of the order, on their way to Heidelberg, and, joining himself to them, pleasantly accomplished the rest of the journey.[3]

The chief business of the Assembly was despatched by the re-election of Staupitz as Vicar, and the replacing of Luther by Lang, in the minor office of District Vicar. But according to the custom of the order, the occasion was taken to hold a disputation, which was under the presidency of Luther. He prepared forty Theses—twenty-eight theological, twelve philosophical, which were to be defended against all comers by his friend and scholar Leonard Beyer. The theological theses he called "Paradoxa," proposing for inquiry, whether they were "well or ill derived from the divine Paul, Christ's most chosen vessel and organ; and, in the second place, from St. Augustine, his most faithful interpreter." There is no mention of indulgences here; he seems to regard that controversy as a quite unimportant thing compared with the "Theology of the Cross," which he sets forth in bold and striking phrase. His theme—the theme which he had elaborated in his cell at Erfurt, and had since at Wittenberg been throwing into a completer logical form—is the utter impotence of man to do good works, and his sole reliance upon Christ for salvation. The tendency of the

[1] In a letter to Spalatin of May 18, Luther says of Jacob Simler, who had been the tutor of the Pfalzgraf Wolfgang, "Non potuit satis commendare Magister Jacobus literas Principis nostri pro me datas, dicens sua Necharena lingua, 'ihr habt by Gott einen kystlichen Credenz,'" De W. vol. i. p. 111.

[2] Just before his death he wrote to the Elector Frederick, recommending Luther to his special care, "Eur Liebe wolle je den frummen Mann, Doctor Martinus, nicht wegziehen lassen, denn ihm geschehe Unrecht," Spalatin, *F. d. W.* p. 161.

[3] De W. vol. i. pp. 98, 105, 106; Kolde, *Staupitz*, p. 314 *note*.

whole may easily be inferred from the 26th Thesis: "The Law says, 'Do this,' and it is never done. Grace says, 'Believe on Him,' and all things are done already." The twelve philosophical Theses, on the other hand, are chiefly remarkable in their pronounced rebellion against the authority of Aristotle, as rivals to whom Plato and Anaxagoras are set up. The chief interest of the disputation, however, must have been upon the theological side. The Lutheran doctrine of salvation could not be more vividly stated than in these theses, presented by an Augustinian monk to the brethren of his order, at the moment of laying down an important office, which he had filled to the general satisfaction.[1]

The disputation went off amid much applause and mutual congratulation. The Pfalzgraf Wolfgang, who received the Saxon Augustinians with princely hospitality, and exhibited to them all the treasures of the Castle, wrote to Frederick that Luther had won for himself no little praise, and worthily upheld the credit of Wittenberg. One only of the Heidelberg doctors, the youngest of them all, had cried out amid general laughter, "that if the peasants heard these things they would certainly stone him." More remarkable still was the concourse of young men, afterwards to be Luther's most vigorous lieutenants in the army of reformation, who then, for the first time, looked upon his face, and caught the inspiration of his presence. There was John Brenz, then in his nineteenth year, a student at Heidelberg; afterwards famous as the Reformer of Swabia, and, if possible, more uncompromising than Luther himself in his defence of the Real Presence in the Eucharist. In all likelihood there was Erhard Schnepf, a few years older than Brenz, who was to play a great part in introducing the reform into Würtemberg, and who survived to share in the unhappy controversies which followed the death of Luther. There was Theobald Billican, afterwards Pastor of Nördlingen, who finally abjured Lutheranism, and in the last years of his life taught Canon Law at Heidelberg, History and Rhetoric at Marburg. Better known than any of them there was Martin Butzer, or Bucer, the would-be mediator between the German and the Swiss Reformers, who ended his

[1] The Heidelberg Theses will be found in Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 353.

days as professor of the reformed theology at Cambridge. In a letter to Beatus Rhenanus, full of admiring enthusiasm, Bucer has left behind his impressions of Luther, derived partly from his public appearance at the disputation, partly from a private interview that followed it. "What Erasmus only insinuated," thought Bucer, "Luther openly and freely taught." The contrast in all probability suggested itself to many young and ardent minds; the time was quickly becoming ripe for clear and decisive speech.[1]

To awaken the enthusiasm of the young, never averse to change, is, however, another and an easier thing than to win the approval of the old, whose convictions and sympathies are all with the past. On his way home, Luther travelled in the same vehicle with Bartholomew Arnoldi von Usingen, one of his old teachers at Erfurt. But he was not successful in presenting his new views to him, and left him, he says, "thoughtful and wondering." Nor did he make more way with Trutvetter, who had written to him to express dissatisfaction with his general philosophical and theological attitude. On his way through Erfurt, Luther knocked at his old master's door; but not being able to see him, addressed to him a letter, in which he gives an account of himself, as a scholar to a teacher, beloved and respected. But the gulf between them was too wide to be bridged over. Trutvetter was a convinced disciple of Aristotle and the Schoolmen, and not likely to acknowledge the futility of the studies to which his life had been devoted. And Luther, without departing from the tone of almost submissive respect, is not disposed to concede one inch of the position which he had taken up. He asserts that the whole University of Wittenberg, with the exception of a single licentiate, is with him in his doctrine of grace and works; he declares that the Elector and the Bishop of Brandenburg take the same view; "many other prelates and all intelligent citizens now avow with one mouth, that before they had never known or heard Christ and the Gospel." But he is not content with the adduction of these authorities. "I absolutely believe," he goes on to say, "that it is impossible to

[1] De W. vol. i. p. 111; Tentzel, vol. i. p. 330; Hartmann, *Joh. Brenz*, p. 5. Bucer's letter to Beatus Rhenanus will be found in Gerdes, vol. i. App. p. 175.

reform the Church, unless the canons, the decretals, the scholastic theology, philosophy and logic, as they are now treated, are utterly rooted up, and other studies put in their place. And in that opinion I go so far as daily to pray God that this may happen at once, in order that the pure study of the Scriptures and the Fathers may be restored. I may seem to you to be no logician, nor, perhaps, am I; but one thing I know, that in the defence of this opinion I fear no man's logic." With this, though we hear of no open rupture, the breach must have been complete. From the old he turned with renewed expectation to the young. "My chief hope," he writes to Spalatin on the 18th of May, "is, that as Christ, rejected by the Jews, passed over to the Gentiles, so now too his true theology, which these obstinate old men reject, may transfer itself to the young." He had come back from Heidelberg full of cheerful energy; his friends thought him looking better and stouter. He had found an audience for his opinions outside the Wittenberg circle; and in proportion as he was compelled to break with a passing generation, felt himself in accord with one that was coming. In the same letter to Spalatin he begs that provision may be made for the teaching of Greek and Hebrew at the University. That sentence is the courier announcing the speedy arrival of Melanchthon.[1]

On his return to Wittenberg Luther applied himself to the task of finishing his *Resolutiones Disputationum de Indulgentiarum Virtute*, the work in which he expounded and defended his Ninety-five Theses. On the 22d of May he sent the MS. to his ordinary, the Bishop of Brandenburg; on the 30th to Staupitz, as the officer of his order to whom he was immediately responsible. What he asked of Staupitz, however, was to transmit the *Resolutiones* to the Pope, together with a letter, in which he submissively placed himself and his doctrine at the disposal of the Holy See. In the meantime, the printing of the book went on, but was not completed, until, on the 21st of August, its author was able to send a copy to Spalatin, no doubt for the Elector's use. In these letters, especially in that to the Bishop of Brandenburg, Luther still adheres to his position that the Theses are matters for disputation only, and

[1] De W. vol. i. pp. 108, 112. Lingke, p. 37 *seq.*

are not to be taken as deliberate and irrevocable expressions of opinion. "Among them," he says, "are some things of which I doubt; of some I am ignorant; some I deny; while I pertinaciously assert none, and submit all to Holy Church and its judgment." So to Leo also he expresses himself in terms of the most submissive humility. "Wherefore, most blessed Father, I offer myself prostrate at the feet of your Blessedness, with all that I am and have; quicken, slay, call, recall, approve, reprove, as may seem to you good. I will acknowledge your voice as the voice of Christ, residing and speaking in you. If I have deserved death, I will not refuse to die." And again to Spalatin: "I may err in disputation: I will never be a heretic. But I desire to define nothing; still more, not to be led captive by the opinions of men."[1]

If the book itself hardly answered to the modesty of these assertions, and proved to be a bold restatement and defence of the Theses, the last words may to some extent furnish the reason. Luther was able to assert, with truth, that the doctrine of indulgences had never been formally defined by competent authority, and therefore to take up the technically impregnable position, that in attacking it, he was not rebelling against Church or Pope. Whether, in his own mind, he really separated Leo from former Popes, of whom he spoke in terms of just severity, or was able to persuade himself that the Pontiff who had issued the indulgence could be brought to recognise its abuses, it is difficult to say. There is no lack of speaking out in the *Resolutiones*. The form of disputation is a transparent mask of the writer's fixed and vehemently held opinions. And the implications of the book are, perhaps, in some respects, more remarkable than its direct statements. It adopts, as if by instinct, the Scriptural method. It does not anywhere lay down the principle that the Bible is the ultimate authority on matters of faith, but it assumes it in illustrating every position by an abundant citation of texts. It brushes aside scholastic authorities, even of such high distinction as St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventura, with the apostolic word, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good."[2] Still more

[1] De W. vol. i. pp. 112, 114, 115, 119, 122, 133.

[2] Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 568 (*Resolutiones*).

remarkable is the way in which, as by an inward necessity of his nature, Luther penetrates to the spiritual reality underlying a disputed point. It is the first public revelation, except to some extent in the Theses themselves, of the peculiar power which made him what he was. He cannot rest in words, or symbols, or figures of speech. Beneath these he must find the actual relations of the human soul to God, which they involve and are intended to express.

Many things in this treatise must have struck harshly on the ears of Leo and his courtiers; as, for instance, the assertion of the superiority of an Ecumenical Council to the Pope; the declaration that the Pope, "who is but a man like others," cannot of himself decree an article of faith; the contempt cast on pilgrimages in search of indulgences; the slighting way in which relics are spoken of. If the Archbishop of Mainz read the book, which is not likely, he could hardly be pleased with its sharp criticism of his "Summary Instruction" to the indulgence-mongers. The theory of the heavenly treasure was undermined by a denial of the supererogatory merits of the saints: "no single saint has in this life completely fulfilled the commands of God," and consequently none has anything to spare for others. Sometimes, no doubt unconsciously, he strikes a rationalistic note. "Even if St. Thomas, the blessed Bonaventura, Alexander Hales, are illustrious men, with their disciples Antoninus, Peter Paludanus, Augustine of Ancona, besides the Canonists, who follow them all, it is right to prefer to them, in the first place, truth, in the second, the authority of the Pope and the Church." But perhaps the boldest, and, in that respect, the most notable passage of all, is the following, in which he at first laments the ill success of the Lateran Council: "Although there are in the Church both very learned and very holy men, it is nevertheless the infelicity of our age, that even they, being what they are, cannot succour the Church. How little at this day learning and pious zeal can do, has been sufficiently proved by the unhappy issue of the efforts of those most wise and holy men, who, under Julius II, applied themselves to the reformation of the Church by a council called together for that purpose. Everywhere there are excellent and erudite bishops, whom I know; but the example of the few

imposes silence on the many. For, as the prophet Amos says (v. 13), 'Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time; for it is an evil time.' Now, at last, we have a most excellent Pontiff, Leo X, whose integrity and learning are a delight in all good men's ears. But what can that most benign of men do alone, in so great a confusion of affairs, worthy as he is to reign in better times, or that the times of his reign should be better? In this age we are worthy only of such pontiffs as Julius II, Alexander VI, or other such atrocious Mezentii as poets have invented. For Rome herself, yea, Rome most of all, now laughs at good men; in what part of the Christian world do men more freely make a mock of the best Bishops than in Rome, that true Babylon? But enough of this. . . . It is better that truth should be spoken by fools, by children, by drunkards, than never spoken at all." Language like this was a distinct step in advance. What was to come of it, probably Luther never asked himself; he was under a moral necessity of speech, and he spoke, leaving the issue to time and God. But it was no longer a mere dispute as to indulgences and their abuse: obscure, and almost alone, he had challenged the whole Papal system.[1]

The controversy with Tetzel did not trouble him much; he had better work on hand before long, and worthier foemen. In May 1518, the Dominican published a *Refutation* of the sermon on *Indulgence and Grace:* to which, in the following month, Luther replied by a *Defence*,[2] on neither of which is it necessary to delay. Already the first mutterings of that controversy with Eck, which culminated in the Disputation of Leipzig, were beginning to be heard. A more important matter was that the Pope had taken up the case. There were those about Leo X, Dominicans especially, who were, after a fashion, zealous for the purity of the faith, and eager to maintain the authority of the Pope; but it is difficult to believe that the Supreme Pontiff himself cared much about the theological aspects of the question. He probably felt as a monarch might who suddenly saw an important source of revenue in

[1] Weimar ed. vol. i. pp. 573, 583, 589, 597, 606, 611, 613 (*Resolutiones*). Löscher, vol. i. p. 484; Luther's in Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 380.

[2] Tetzel's pamphlet will be found in

danger of drying up, and did not know how to replace it; but he was no theologian, and, but for the accident of his position, hardly a Churchman. "Since God has given us the Papacy, let us enjoy it," was his characteristic exclamation on hearing of his election; and all he desired was peace and quietness to taste the full sweetness of his position, and money to spend on the pursuits that he loved. He was a true child of the Renaissance; the Head of the Church as a result of family ambition; and for all that a Pagan in grain. If his life did not emulate the outrageous licence of some of his predecessors, it was equally free from any taint of asceticism; his policy was, like that of any other Italian potentate, frankly selfish and worldly, and he was as devoted to the interests of the Medici as Maximilian to those of his own branch of Hapsburgs. What he really cared for was art: the last MS. of a Greek poet brought from Constantinople; the newest statue dug up from the ruins of Rome; the basilica which Michael Angelo was slowly rearing by the side of the Vatican; the frescoed glories which were growing under Raphael's brush. The poem was no worse to him for being lascivious, and the indecency of the statue only made it piquant; the laymen of the Renaissance were above moral prejudices, and if Churchmen were obliged to put on a demurer outside, it only added to the secret savour of the delight. Naturally Leo had not in him the stuff of which persecutors are made; he was too anxious to live not to be willing to let live; and he escaped the last indignity of compelling men to believe, out of an unbelieving heart. He would do any one a kindness which did not cost him any effort; he liked to see people happy about him; but he had no conception of the serious thought, the sustained effort, the moral restraint which are necessary for good government; and when he was gone the Roman people forgot his *bonhomie* in the recollection of the prodigality which had emptied the treasury of the Church. Possibly, if he had been of harder metal, or possessed a keener insight, he might have burned out the Reformation in the pyre of one resolute heretic; but he either did not see his opportunity or let it slip. He had favoured Reuchlin as long as the mendicant orders would let him; and now the story went, that he had said that "Brother

Martin was a very clever fellow, and that all the quarrel came of monks' envy.'[1]

It was, however, necessary to do something in answer to the appeal of the Archbishop of Mainz, and Leo's first step was, in February 1518, to refer the case to the Provisional General of the Augustinian Order, Gabriel Venetus, then newly appointed. "If he acted," said the Pope, "with promptitude, it would not be difficult to extinguish the flame that had been kindled . . . If, on the contrary, he delayed, and the evil took head, he feared, that when they wanted to apply a remedy to the conflagration, they would be unable to do it."[2] What steps the Augustinian General took in answer to this request, if indeed any, is matter of controversy; in the meanwhile a champion of the Holy See came forward, in the person of Silvester Mazzolini, usually, from his birthplace Prierio, called Prierias. Like all Luther's other antagonists at this time, he was a Dominican, a censor of books, an inquisitor and judge in matters of faith, who held the dignified office of *Magister Sacri Palatii*, instructor, that is, of the Papal household. Already a man advanced in years, and holding an official position very near the seat of authority, he despised an adversary whose obscurity was only equalled by his audacity. Tearing himself away from his favourite study of Thomas Aquinas, he composed, in three days, a treatise, in the form of a dialogue between himself and Luther, in which, taking up the Ninety-five Theses in succession, he flattered himself that he demonstrated the heresy of their author. The only interest of the Dialogue, however, lies in four fundamental principles which he laid down at the beginning. In these was expressed in uncompromising terms the doctrine of the Church which found favour with the Roman Curia. The Universal Church was virtually the Roman Church and the Supreme Pontiff. Representatively, the Roman Church is the College of Cardinals, virtually the Pope himself. This Church, in matters of faith and morals, cannot err, nor can the Pope, "speaking in the exercise of his office, and doing what in him lies to appre-

[1] Matteo Bandello, quoted by Gieseler (*Kirchengeschichte*, vol. iii. pt. 1, p. 38 *note*), "Che Fra Martino fosse un bellissimo ingegno, e che coteste erano invidie fratesche."

[2] Gieseler, vol. iii. pt. 1, p. 38 *note*.

hend the truth." "Whoever," says the Third Proposition, "does not lean upon the doctrine of the Roman Church and the Roman Pontiff as an infallible rule of faith, from which even the Sacred Scriptures derive their force and authority, is a heretic." What the Roman Church does, as well as what it says, constitutes a custom and acquires the force of law. From all of which follows the obvious corollary, "Who, in the matter of indulgences, says that the Roman Church cannot do what it actually does, is a heretic." A *quod erat demonstrandum* which must have been infinitely satisfactory to the mind of the Master of the Sacred Palace.[1]

To prove to Luther that his Theses were not in accordance with the doctrine of St. Thomas—a fact which he already knew quite well—was hardly the way to convince him of his error. At first he effectually marked his contempt for the character of the attack by publishing in Germany two editions of the *Dialogue* without comment or answer; then, as these were eagerly bought up, he issued about the end of August a third edition, accompanied by a *Responsio*, which he had written, as he told Spalatin, in two days. But it is significant that his answer is entitled, *Of the Power of the Pope*, as if, while Prierias's attack upon the Theses might well be passed by in silence, his fundamental propositions were worth refutation. The treatise, however, hardly answers to its title; it takes up Prierias's objections to the Theses one by one, and answers them in true dialectical fashion. At first, indeed, he brushes aside the four fundamental propositions, laying down others which are sufficiently subversive of them. He quotes Paul, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good;" he cites Augustine for the principle, that only the Canonical books can be regarded as wholly free from error. Again and again in the course of his argument he repudiates the authority of St. Thomas, to which his adversary appeals as all-sufficient. He lays it down that it is possible for either Pope or Council to err. Then he breaks out, "I deny and hold of no account your fundamental principles, in which you have distinguished an essential, a representative, a virtual Church. For they are your own, that is, laid down without Scripture or any authority.

1 For Prierias's *Dialogus*, *vide* Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. i. p. 341 *seq.*

I do not know the Church virtually, except in Christ: representatively, except in a Council. Else, if whatever the virtual Church, that is the Pope, does, is to be accounted the act of the Church, what monstrous things in the Church shall we have to number among things well done? What of the horrid effusion of Christian blood by Julius II? What of the tyranny of Boniface VIII, hated by the whole world and reprobated in all chronicles, of whom the saying is current, 'He came in like a fox, he reigned like a lion, he died like a dog?'"

Writing like this could not but widen the breach; it was of little use to appeal to the Pope in terms of humble submission, and at the same time to run full tilt against theories of Papal authority which the Church was doing its best to elevate into articles of faith. Gerson and D'Ailly were long dead, the age of great Councils past; it was an anachronism to set up the Church against the Pope. For those who were not prepared to accept the opinions and actions of the Supreme Pontiff and his subservient advisers, it was every day more plain that only one alternative was open, revolt and schism.[1]

Another utterance of Luther's about this time, apparently made without any reference to his controversy with Rome, lessened the chances of reconciliation. One Sunday in May, he preached a sermon in Wittenberg on the Force of Excommunication. The occasion of it was purely local; there had been some trouble with the officials of the Bishop of Brandenburg, of what precise kind we do not know. The sermon made a great noise and excited much criticism; so that Luther proposed to make the doctrines which he had advanced a subject of disputation, and only abandoned the idea at the request of the Bishop. In the meantime the matter grew in passing from mouth to mouth; the story got to the Diet which was being held at Augsburg, and was told, with additions much to Luther's disadvantage; on a visit which he paid to Dresden, he was confronted and reproached with it. The result was that he made up his mind to print what he could recollect of it; if the exact words were gone, he could at least recall the sense. The *Sermo de Virtute Excommunicationis* was there-

[1] Weimar ed. vol. i. pp. 647, 656 (*Ad dialogum S. Prieratis Responsio*); De W. vol. i. p. 135.

fore published between the 21st and 31st of August. The issue vindicated Luther from the charge of having spoken unworthily of Church authorities; but only at the cost of proving him a more hopeless rebel than before. "Excommunication," he said, "is only the deprivation of communion; the placing of a man outside the communion of the faithful. This communion of the faithful is twofold: one, internal and spiritual; the other, external and corporal. Spiritual communion is the one faith, hope, charity towards God. Corporal communion is participation in the same sacraments, that is, in the *signs* of faith, hope, charity." The obvious conclusion from this is, first, that so far as spiritual communion is concerned, only God can take it away or restore it; and that the only true excommunication is that which a man inflicts on himself by his own sin; and next, that Church excommunication is only the deprivation of external communion, that is of the sacraments, burial, public prayer, and the like. "From which things," he goes on, "it is abundantly evident that, so long as faith, hope, and charity remain, true communion and participation in all the goods of the Church remain also." This is spiritual, but hardly Catholic doctrine. It not only took out of the hands of the Pope all the terror implied in the power of the keys, but indicated the chief line of fissure between the mediæval Church and that which was yet unborn.[1]

In the meantime the formal proceedings against Luther were taking shape. Mario di Perusco, a Papal Procurator-fiscal, was ordered to draw up an indictment for heresy against him, and Hieronymus Ghinucci and Prierias were named as judges. The former was auditor of the Papal Camera, a man concerned with legal and financial matters, not supposed to possess any special knowledge of theology; the latter had already decisively taken up the position of a partisan.[2] A citation was issued, ordering Luther to appear in Rome, and to plead to the indictment within sixty days. This he received at Wittenberg on the 7th of August. At once he wrote to Spalatin, begging

[1] De W. vol. i. pp. 130, 134, 138. Conf. letter of Spalatin to Luther. Enders, vol. i. p. 233; Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 639.

[2] It is fair to state that Pallavicini (*Hist. Conc. Trid.* lib. i. cap. vii.) says that opportunity was given to Luther to object to Prierias, "ob commissam prius inter eos contentionem." The text of the citation has not come down to us.

him to use his influence with the Elector and his minister, Degenhard Pfeffinger, both of whom were attending the Diet at Augsburg, that they might prevail with the Pope to permit his cause to be heard before commissaries in Germany. A few days later he wrote again, suggesting that if the Elector should refuse him a safe conduct through his dominions, it would be a sufficient excuse for not going to Rome. Frederick behaved on this occasion as he behaved all through. To the Cardinal della Rovere, who, as an old friend, had written to remonstrate with him on his protection of so notorious a heretic,[1] he answered, in effect, that he had no sympathy with heretics and heresy; and that all he desired was that Luther should have a fair trial, to which, he understood, he was quite willing to submit himself. This was indeed the avowed object of his diplomacy, which was, after a few weeks, successful. There was a good deal of writing to and fro, and no doubt much anxious talk, of which no record now remains. It is worth mentioning that the University of Wittenberg addressed two letters, one to the Pope himself, one to his Saxon chamberlain, Charles von Miltitz; the former excusing Luther from going to Rome on the ground of his infirm health, the latter testifying not only to his character but to his orthodoxy. But before these were written, the desired result had been reached. On the 23d of August the Pope wrote to the Elector, bidding him produce Luther, whom he describes as "a son of iniquity," before Cardinal Cajetan in Augsburg, to be judged by the Holy See.[2]

Luther accordingly set out from Wittenberg on or about the 26th of September with a heavy heart. He might well have thought that this was the crisis of his fate. Friends warned him not to trust himself out of Wittenberg; Count Albert of Mansfeld sent him word that there was a plot to take him off; Staupitz wrote to him from Salzburg, telling him that, so far as he could see, "nothing remained for him but a cross," and begging him "to come and live and die with him," abandoning, it must be supposed, the work to which he

[1] The Cardinal's letter, which is lost, was dated April 3; the Elector's reply, August 5: Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 351.

[2] Weimar ed. vol. ii. pp. 23, 25, 30, 38 (*Acta Augustana*); De W. vol. i. pp. 131, 132; Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. pp. 352, 361.

had set his hand. His health was not good; the "temptations," which were a continually recurring element of his mental history, chose this occasion of assault. "The citation," he writes to Staupitz, "and the threats aimed at me, move me not at all. I suffer, as you know, incomparably worse things, which compel me to regard as trifles these temporal and momentary thunders." He was filled with melancholy forebodings. "Now," he thought, "I must die"; he saw in imagination the heretic's pyre already prepared; "what a scandal I shall be to my dear parents," was a word often upon his lips. Travelling on foot, as was his wont, he arrived at Weimar, where the Elector was holding his court, on the 28th: there said mass, and preached; and proceeded on his way, with a letter of recommendation and twenty gulden, the gift of Frederick, in his pocket.[1] At Nürnberg, he was hospitably received by his old friend Link, who lent him a good cowl, and with another Augustinian monk, Leonard Beyer, accompanied him to Augsburg. Before he got there, however, on the 7th of October, fatigue and illness compelled him to take to a vehicle. But his spirit was undaunted, however weak and weary his body. A Carmelite monk at Weimar, John Kestner, had warned him that the Italians were a learned folk, and that if he could not hold his own with them, they would certainly burn him. "Nettles might do," was the cheerful answer, "fire, dear friend, would be too hot. The affair is Christ's; if he sustains it, it is already sustained; if not, I cannot sustain it for him, and he must bear the shame." So, in a fragment of a letter written from Nürnberg, to whom we do not know, he says, "I have found some men so pusillanimous in my cause, as to have begun to tempt me not to go to Augsburg. But I persevere with a fixed mind. The will of the Lord be done. Even at Augsburg, even in the midst of his enemies, Jesus Christ reigns."[2]

[1] A further evidence of the Elector's personal interest in Luther's journey is afforded by the fact that he wrote to Anton Tucher of Nürnberg, requesting that the Senate of that city would allow Scheurl to go to Augsburg to act as Luther's friend and adviser. Scheurl was, however, absent from Nürnberg at the time, and the request fell to the ground. Letter from Frederick to Tucher, Sept. 27, 1518, quoted by Köstlin, *Theol. Stud. u. Kritiken*, 1882, p. 692.

[2] De W. vol. i. pp. 129, 137; Enders, vol. i. pp. 234, 238; *Coll.* vol. ii. p. 175; Myconius, p. 31; Lingke, p. 47.

The Diet which had been held at Augsburg in the autumn of 1518, and which was just separating into its component elements, was the last over which Maximilian presided. All unconscious, however, that his end was near, he was busier than ever in weaving schemes for the aggrandisement of the Austro-Burgundian House. The romantic marriage which in his youth he had contracted with Mary, the daughter and heiress of Charles the Bold of Burgundy, though it had brought little profit to himself personally, had laid the foundation of a fortune of unexampled brilliancy for his family. She had died after a few years' marriage, leaving two infant children, Philip and Margaret; Lewis XI had seized whatever of the inheritance he could lay his hands upon; and as Philip grew to manhood, it was made clear that the Burgundian States considered their allegiance to be due not to the father, but to the son. But again the House of Austria made one of the great marriages, upon which, rather than upon successful wars, its fortune was founded; Philip, by his union with Joan,[1] the daughter and heiress of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, saw before him the dazzling prospect of subjecting to one sceptre not only Naples and the Netherlands, but almost all the Spanish Peninsula, with its rich outlook upon the new world. But once more the prospect was overclouded. The rooted melancholy of the bride, a fatal inheritance which she was to transmit to so many of her descendants, deepened into madness; the bridegroom was fickle and careless, a standing outrage to the gravity of Spanish manners and the pride of Spanish patriotism. He died in 1506, and when, ten years afterwards, Ferdinand followed him, his son Charles, already in right of his mad mother King of Castile, saw the whole vast inheritance fall into his hands.

But what of the Empire? If it were possible that Charles

[1] Joan became heiress of Spain only in consequence of a series of family misfortunes, and *after* her marriage with Philip. She was the second daughter and third child of her parents. She was married in 1496. In October 1497 died her only brother Juan. Her elder sister Isabella, married to King Manuel of Portugal, then became the heir; she, however, died in August 1498, after the birth of her son Miguel. Had this child lived, he would have united the Peninsular Kingdoms, and so have altered the course of subsequent European history; but he died before he was two years old, and the vast inheritance subsequently fell to Joan and her son Charles V. Baumgarten, *Karl V.* vol. i. pp. 9, 10.

should succeed his grandfather on the highest of earthly thrones, the House of Hapsburg would reach a pinnacle of greatness to find a parallel to which it would be necessary to go back to the reign of Charlemagne. There were, however, many difficulties in the way, some of them almost insurmountable. One, and not the least, was that Maximilian himself was not technically Emperor, but only Emperor-elect; he had never been crowned at Rome or elsewhere; and it seemed to be a political solecism to place one King of the Romans beside another.[1] Nothing daunted, the old man nevertheless set to work to weave a web of intrigue which should enclose all the electors; and was, in fact, successful in bringing over to the interests of his house all but Frederick of Saxony, and Richard von Greiffenklau, Archbishop of Trier. Into the details of these tortuous and discreditable negotiations it is not necessary to go; for the death of Maximilian, only a few weeks after the Diet had broken up, compelled the entire reweaving of the web. But the facts already stated will sufficiently show two things: first, that Maximilian, apparently on the point of attaining the great object of his life, was more than usually anxious to conciliate the Church; and next, that the directors of a mingled ecclesiastical and Imperial policy were unwilling to offend an Elector so powerful, both from position and character, as Frederick. It was indeed while the Diet was still sitting that the Pope announced his intention of sending to the latter the Golden Rose, afterwards actually conveyed by Miltitz; a mark of grace usually bestowed upon the potentate who at the moment stood highest in Papal favour.

The choice of a legate was made with special reference to both the political and the theological exigences of the case. He was Thomas de Vio, a Dominican monk, who had been General of his order, and had just been admitted to the Sacred College under the title of Cardinal of St. Sixtus. History, however, knows him best as Cajetan, a name which he took from his birthplace, Gaeta. He was a real theologian of the

[1] For instance, in Pope Leo's instructions to Cajetan, Maximilian is spoken of as "in Imperatorem electum" (Löscher, vol. ii. p. 310). In the Emperor's answer to the memorial of the Bishop of Liège, alluded to below, he styles himself "Maximilianus, divinâ favente clementiâ, electus Romanorum semper Augustus." Kapp, *Kleine Nachlese*, vol. ii. p. 418.

Dominican sort.[1] Devoted to Thomas Aquinas, from whom he had taken his monastic name, he had written a commentary on the *Summa*, which he considered as the quintessence of theological wisdom. But this was not all; he had made his way to distinction by adopting and defending the opinions on Papal authority which were then fashionable at Rome: he had played a part in this sense at the Lateran Council; and had, at the moment of which we are speaking, recently published a treatise on Indulgences. Indeed, through all his subsequent life—he died in 1534—he mingled in the controversies of the day, always on the Papal side and from his Dominican point of view, yet not without showing a certain independence of opinion and speculation. In 1518 he was just fifty; a man who loved pomp and splendour, and was apt to magnify the dignity of his office. Luther was not named in his instructions. He was to stir up the Emperor, as well as Christian, King of Denmark, to a crusade against the Turks, which was to be made under the auspices of the Pope, and in the strength of united Christendom; and if he could, to reconcile Bohemia, which, under the influence of the enemy of mankind, had fallen away into heresy, with Mother Church. Still, the interests of the true faith occupy so large a place in the injunctions which Leo gave to Cajetan as to make it impossible not to believe, when we read in one place of "the parts adjacent to Bohemia" as also infected with heresy, that both Pope and Legate had a secret outlook towards Saxony.[2]

The ceremonial part of his mission was no doubt greatly to Cajetan's mind. He invested Maximilian with a cap and sword which the Pope had blessed. He brought with him to Germany a red hat for Albert of Mainz. In the political object of his mission he was hardly as successful. It fell in exactly with the wishes of the old Emperor, still, in spite of a thousand disappointments, full of schemes, and always restlessly reaching after a success that never came. He had been trying all his life to induce the Princes and free cities of Ger-

[1] Pallavicini (bk. i. chap. 9) calls Cajetan "Theologus ejus aetatis spectatissimus ac facile princeps."

[2] The Pope's instructions to Cajetan will be found in Löscher, vol. ii. p. 310. Conf. *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. v. p. 618; *Zeitschrift für die historische Theologie*, 1858, p. 431 *et seq.* (C. F. Jäger, *Cajetan's Kampf gegen die Lutherische Lehrreform*).

many to raise troops and to pay taxes for Imperial purposes, in accordance with a generally adopted assessment. Nothing could have pleased his adventurous spirit better, nothing would more completely accord with his dynastic policy, than to place himself at the head not only of the Empire but of Europe in a crusade against the common enemy of Christendom. But the States of Germany had their minds fixed on quite different objects. They were full of wrath and distrust against Pope, Curia, and all that was involved in the word Rome. The crusade against the Turks was, they thought, only a device to get hold of German money; the real Turks, against whom it was necessary to contend, were in Italy. They had contributed to a Turkish war before, not once but many times, and nothing had come of it. The Princes, in their unwillingness to trust Emperor and Pope with the proceeds of taxation, even took up a position which was new in the history of the Empire: they could do nothing, they said, without consulting their subjects; a declaration which, in its implied denial of the plenary powers of the Diet, was one step more towards the autonomy of the separate States. On the other hand, the old accusations against Roman abuse and extortion were showered on the Legate. The Prince Bishop of Liège, Erardus de Marca, presented a memorial to Emperor and Princes, in which he recited the accustomed grievances in the strongest terms. The Concordat between Rome and the Empire had been only too favourable to the Church; but even the Concordat was infringed at almost every point. As the event proved, it would have availed nothing, had Maximilian at this last moment thrown himself on the side of the national aspirations, and at the head of a united Empire demanded of the Pope redress of grievances, and some effectual reform. He was not without a dim perception of Luther's importance—perhaps as much as an aged Emperor was likely to have in the case of a poor Augustinian friar. "What is your monk about?" he is said to have asked Pfeffinger at Augsburg. "Truly his Theses are not to be despised; he will play a game with the parsons: tell your Elector to take good care of him, he will be wanted some day." There is even a story, which, however, rests on insufficient evidence, that he

wrote to the old humanist and patriot Wimpheling, to ask what at this juncture he should do with Luther. But if he at all saw and approved the better course, he followed the worse; he wrote to the Pope from Augsburg, on the 5th of August, a letter of general adhesion, in which he mentioned Luther only to condemn him; and for the sake of the dynastic objects, which always held the first place in the mind of a Hapsburg, sacrificed the chance of at once reforming the Church and uniting the Empire.[1]

There was no Augustinian convent in Augsburg, but Luther on his arrival was hospitably entertained by the Carmelites, whose Prior, John Frosch, had been a student at Wittenberg. He was indeed far from friendless. Apart from the populace, who were eager to gaze at him "as the Herostratus of so great a conflagration," some of the chief citizens of Augsburg were ready to advise and assist him, among whom were Conrad Peutinger, the well-known humanist, and a canon, Christopher Langemantel, and Dr. John Auer, a lawyer and a member of the city council. Two of Frederick's trusted advisers, Dr. Rühel and Philip von Feilitsch, gave him help and countenance, and a message which he despatched, we do not know exactly whither, soon brought Staupitz to his side. A year all but a few days had elapsed since he had published the Ninety-five Theses, and every week had brought him fresh friends, every month had made him more the representative of the religious aspirations of the German people. It was in compliance with these advisers that he did not attempt to see the Cardinal at once. So far into the lion's mouth he had ventured without any other safe-conduct than was implied in the promises which Cajetan had made to Frederick; but before going further it was thought desirable that he should receive a formal pledge of safety from the Emperor, and Maximilian was hunting at some little distance from Augsburg. In the meantime he received two official visits from an Italian diplomatist, Urban di Serralonga, who had in 1517 represented the Marquis of Montferrat at the court of Saxony, and had

[1] De W. vol. i. p. 140; Kapp, *Kleine Nachlese*, vol. ii. p. 409; Seckendorf, lib. i. sec. 16, § xxxiii. p. 42; Schmidt, *Hist. Litt. de l'Alsace*, vol. i. p. 94; Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 349; Ranke, vol. i. p. 248 *et seq.*; Walch, vol. xv. p. 544 *et seq.*

now attached himself to Cajetan. He was an Italian of the Italians, a man of a light mind and a loose tongue, quite incapable of seeing the gravity of the issues involved, and perhaps desirous in his own careless way that the difficulty should be smoothed over, and the daring monk allowed to go scot free. He came to offer Luther his friendliest advice as to both the matter and the manner of his behaviour to the Cardinal; but in truth he did not see what there was before him but recantation. The only question, he said, was as to the six letters REVOKA. Joachim of Flora had recanted, and though he had written heretical things, was not accounted a heretic. When Luther, true to the position which he maintained all through, declared that he wanted to be instructed and convinced of his errors, "do you wish," said Serralonga, "to play at running at the ring with the Cardinal?" He even cynically declared that he did not see why untrue propositions should not be presented to the people, if only they brought in money. Such an adviser as this was not likely to make much way with Luther, who, on his second visit, met him with a rebuke which seems to have pierced the thick hide of his indifference. "Do you think," said Serralonga, "that the Elector will take up arms on your account?"—"I neither think nor wish it," was the reply. "And where will you be then?"—"Under the heavens." To this it was evidently hard to find a rejoinder.[1]

The safe-conduct arrived on October 11th, and on Tuesday the 12th Luther had his first audience of the Cardinal. He took with him his host, the Carmelite Prior, and two of his monks, his old friend Link, and another Augustinian; on the other hand, the Cardinal had by his side the Apostolical Nuncio, and Serralonga. As he had been instructed by the latter, Luther prostrated himself before the Cardinal, who courteously bade him rise. After one or two complimentary sentences, the real business of the interview was entered upon, and the divergence between the two parties at once made plain. Cajetan was perfectly willing to behave in a kindly and fatherly way to

[1] De W. vol. i. pp. 143, 144, 146, 160, 167; vol. vi. p. 7; *Lib. Decan.* p. 17; Löscher, vol. ii. p. 452; Tentzel, vol. ii. p. 166; Erl. *Opp.* v.a. vol. i. p. 18 (*Praefatio*); Deutsche Schriften, vol. lxiv. p. 363 (*Nachlese*).

Luther, if he would promptly and unconditionally recant; Luther, on the other hand, asked that his alleged errors might be pointed out and proved to be erroneous. The Cardinal's demand was threefold: (1) that Luther should repent and recant his heresies; (2) that he should promise not to promulgate them for the future; (3) that he should abstain from whatever might disturb the Church. Then, upon Luther's request to have his errors specified, the Cardinal alleged the 58th of the Ninety-five Theses, in which it was denied that the merits of Christ were the treasure of the Church, and next, the doctrine laid down in the exposition, in the *Resolutiones* of the 7th Thesis, that faith is necessary to the effectual reception of the Sacraments. In regard to the first point, he brought forward the *Extravagans* of Clement VI's *Unigenitus*, which he supposed that Luther had not seen, while he confidently stigmatised the second as a new and heretical doctrine.[1] But strange to say, Luther was not at all disposed to bow down to the authority of the *Extravagans*, with which he was perfectly familiar, as well as with another of Sixtus IV bearing upon the same subject. These documents, he thought, were of comparatively little account, as audaciously perverting the plain sense of Scripture. What floodgates of controversy were opened by so bold a declaration it is easy to imagine; the Cardinal quoted St. Thomas, magnified the authority of the Pope as above Councils, Scripture, the Church; threw scorn upon the University of Paris and those whom he called the Gersonists—in brief, endeavoured to overbear Luther by sheer force of clamour. "Here, here," he cried, "you see that the Pope defines that the merits of Christ are the treasure of indulgences, do you believe or not?" On the one hand, there was a repetition of the cry, Recant or be condemned; on the other, an equally persistent demand for the Scriptural and Patristic proofs which were not forthcoming. The Cardinal

[1] There were two collections of *Extravagantes*, that is, of Papal decrees subsequent to the collection known as the Decretals (*extra decretum vagantes*). The first, *Extravagantes Joannis P.* xxii., contains twenty such documents; the second, *Extravagantes communes*, seventy, proceeding from different Popes, from Urban IV, 1261, to Sixtus IV, 1484. The *Extravagans* referred to in the text will, of course, not be confounded with Clement XI's Bull *Unigenitus*, which played so important a part in the history of the Gallican Church.

sought to bring to bear upon the recusant the authority of the Church, as summed up in the *ipse dixit* of the Pope; Luther replied with the one saving clause, *Salvâ Scripturâ*. And thus the dispute went on, till Luther at last, seeing that it could lead to no good result, asked to be allowed to present on the morrow a written document; and so went back to his lodgings.[1]

The next day, Wednesday, he returned, accompanied this time by three Imperial Councillors, one of whom was Conrad Peutinger, another Philip von Feilitsch, as representative of the Elector Frederick. He also brought with him Staupitz, and a notary to serve as an official witness of the interview. His object was to present to the Cardinal the written statement of what he conceived to be his position in regard to the Church. In this document he declared, first, his desire to be obedient to Holy Church "in all his acts and words, present, past, and future." As to the demands which the Cardinal had made upon him, he said that he had committed no offence in seeking the truth, and could not, unheard and uncondemned, be forced to recant. "I protest this day," he went on, "that I am not conscious of having said anything that is contrary to Holy Scripture, the Fathers of the Church, the Decretals of the Pope, or right reason; but all that I have said seems to me, even to-day, to be sound, true, Catholic." Then, after acknowledging his liability to err, he declared his willingness to dispute publicly as to his alleged heresies, or to reply to any objections in writing, or to submit to the judgment of the three Imperial Universities, Basel, Freiburg, Louvain; or if that were not enough, to the University of Paris, "mother of studies, of old most Christian, and in theology most flourishing." This, however, was not at all what Cajetan wanted. He had been sent to Augsburg, not to involve the Church in theological controversy, but to reclaim, if possible, a dangerous heretic. He suavely put aside the idea of discussion, and when Luther half apologetically said that on the previous day there had been contention enough, answered, "My son, I have not con-

[1] De W. vol. i. p. 148; Spalatin ap. Walch, vol. xv. p. 679; Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 7 *et seq.* (*Acta Augustana*); Luther to the Elector, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 413.

tended, nor am I willing to contend with you, but kindly and patiently to hear and to advise." At this point, however, Staupitz intervened, and with some difficulty obtained from the Legate, who insisted upon unconditional recantation, permission for Luther to defend his theological position in writing. Still, the directness of the issue was not fully felt on either side. The Cardinal did not allow himself to doubt that his fatherly admonitions would have the desired effect, nor did Luther as yet lose faith in the Cardinal's goodwill.[1]

On Thursday, however, matters came to a crisis. Luther came back with a document of some length, dealing first with the authority of the Clementine *Extravagans*, and next with the incriminated proposition as to faith. His method in regard to both was Scriptural and Patristic; in defence of the latter especially, he heaped up Biblical quotations. "I indeed," he said, "am not of such signal temerity as, on account of one Papal Decretal, thus ambiguous and obscure, to withdraw from most clear testimonies of Holy Scripture, so many and so great." So again, "While these authorities stand, I cannot do other than what I know to be obeying God rather than man." We have the whole essence of the Reformation here, though not yet worked out into principles acknowledged to be antagonistic to the Church of Rome: the rejection of the authority of the Pope in favour of the authority of Scripture; the assertion of the subjective necessity and supremacy of faith. Luther may not have known it; Cajetan certainly did not; what was present in the Legate's mind was probably a dull sense of irreconcilable opposition. These were mere words, he said; he would, however, send the document to Rome, and in the meantime urged recantation more than ever. Ten times Luther tried to speak, but was always overborne by the noisy authority of the Legate. At last he too began to shout: "If it can be shown that the *Extravagans* lays it down that the merits of Christ are the treasure of indulgences, I will recant as you wish." Upon this apparent concession of the chief point at issue followed loud laughter; the Legate quickly took up the book and eagerly turned over the pages till he found

[1] Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 8 (*Acta Augustana*); Walch, vol. xv. p. 683; De W. vol. i. p. 181. Spalatin's report, ap.

the place, and read, "that Christ by His passion had acquired the treasure," and so forth. "Mark that word, most Reverend Father," broke in Luther, "*acquired*. If Christ by His merits acquired the treasure, then the merits are not themselves the treasure." The Cardinal tried hard to parry this straightforward thrust, but the spirit of the successful disputant was all alive in Luther now, and he was not disposed to give his adversary any quarter. "Do not let your Reverend Paternity think that the Germans are altogether without grammar; it is one thing to be a treasure, another to acquire it." There was evidently nothing for it but to return to the demand for recantation, pure and simple. "Go," said the Cardinal, "and come back to me no more till you are willing to recant."[1]

The same evening the Cardinal sent for Staupitz and Link, to see whether Luther's friends might not be more malleable than himself. From such authentic information as to the transactions of the next day or two as has come down to us, it is not very easy to reconstruct the mood of some of the chief actors on the scene. The Cardinal adhered steadily to his demand for recantation. Luther, on the other hand, was willing to go to almost any length of submission that did not involve unfaithfulness to convictions which made him, he said, not only a Churchman but a Christian. Staupitz was in a mixed mood. He told the Cardinal that Luther was his superior in strength of mind and Biblical knowledge. He reminded Luther in words, which at the moment seemed to come from a higher than any human source, "that what he had undertaken, he had undertaken in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." He formally released him from his vow of monastic obedience to himself as Vicar of the Augustinian Congregation: whether with a desire to leave him absolutely free to take his own course, or wishing to disconnect himself and the order from a cause which seemed to be becoming desperate, who can tell? Luther at all events did not regard

[1] Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 9 *et seq.* (*Acta Augustana*); Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 365 (Rühel's report); De W. vol. i. pp. 148, 181.

We may place at this point the anecdote related by Myconius (p. 33), that the Cardinal exclaimed, "Ego nolo amplius cum hac bestia loqui. Habet enim profundos oculos et mirabiles speculationes in capite suo." Luther's eyes are said to have been very bright and piercing, a tradition which is strongly confirmed by his earlier portraits.

it as a friendly act; he was wont, in after life, to call it the first of his three excommunications. What is absolutely certain is that Staupitz and Link, first, did their best to persuade Luther to submit, and, then, on Saturday the 16th rode away from Augsburg, without taking leave of the Cardinal. The population of the free city was friendly, some of its most distinguished men were active on Luther's side; but the two Augustinians had heard of certain extraordinary powers entrusted to Cajetan, and persuaded themselves that they were in danger. Was it a desertion? The intercourse by letter between Luther and Staupitz slackens after this, though there are in it, especially at the last, notes of regretful tenderness, as if a single failure of friendship at a moment of crisis was felt to be little to set against years of helpful love and perfect confidence. Nor must it be forgotten that Staupitz had in him none of the stuff of which rebels are made; the mystic was much stronger in him than the reformer, and he would have found a way of living for holiness under any administration of the Church.[1]

It says much for a reasonableness of conscience for which Luther usually gets little credit that his first impulse, when thus left to himself, was to take the advice which his friends had given him, and to try to meet the Cardinal half-way. He accordingly wrote a letter to Cajetan on Sunday the 17th, in which he went as far in the direction of submission as he could; too far, indeed, for his own subsequent approval, if, as Myconius says, he often declared that "God never suffered him to sink so low as then." He confessed that he had been indiscreet, bitter, wanting in reverence to the Pope; he promised that if silence was imposed upon his adversaries also, he would let indulgences alone. But as to the truth of the opinions which he had put forward, he could only fall back upon his own conscience, to say or do anything against which no authority could permit him. St. Thomas and the Schoolmen could not satisfy him in this matter. "This one thing remains, that I should be overcome by better reason, supposing

[1] De W. vol. i. pp. 148, 149, 541; Enders (Cajetan to Frederick), vol. i. p. 271; Seckendorf, lib. i. sec. 18, § 37, p. 47 (quoting from *Val. Bav.*); Kolde, *Staupitz*, App. p. 443; Scheurl, *Briefbuch*, vol. ii. p. 52.

I should deserve to hear the voice of the Bride, for this is certainly to hear the voice of the Bridegroom." Last of all, he begged the Cardinal to refer the case to the Pope, in order that it might be finally and authoritatively determined. "I desire only," he went on, "to hear and obey the Church. For I know not what my recantation of doubtful and undetermined matters would effect—except I fear that it might rightly be objected to me, that I know not either what I have asserted, or what I have withdrawn." To this letter no answer was vouchsafed. No answer was indeed to be expected. Profuse as were its expressions of submission, it still fell far short of the unconditional retractation which the Cardinal demanded. Next day Luther wrote again. He had done all, he said, that became an obedient son of the Church. Notwithstanding the distance, his poverty, the infirmity of his health, he had come to Augsburg to give an account of himself. The Legate had bid him begone, unless he were willing to recant; what, and how far he could recant, he had already signified in writing. Now he could stay no longer; he had no means of his own, and had already sufficiently burthened his Carmelite hosts. The only thing left him, then, was to make a solemn appeal not merely from the Legate, but from the Pope himself imperfectly informed, to the Pope who should be better instructed.[1] What answer he expected to this it is not easy to conjecture, but he waited in Augsburg two days more, and on Wednesday night rode secretly away, through a postern-gate, which Langemantel opened for him, leaving Leonard Beyer to lodge his appeal with the Cardinal. He evidently thought that he was in danger of liberty or life; for only half equipped for such a journey he rode for his first stage to Monheim, eight German miles on the way to Nürnberg. When, on his arrival, he attempted to dismount in the stable, he was too worn out to stand, and fell at once into the straw. He arrived at Wittenberg on the 31st, exactly a year after the publication of the Theses.[2]

On his way home Luther received, at Nürnberg, from

[1] "A sanctissimo Domino Nostro Leone X male informato, ad melius informandum."

[2] De W. vol. i. pp. 161, 163, 164, 166; Myconius, p. 33; Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 419; Deutsche Schriften, vol. lxiv. p. 364 (*Nachlese*).

Spalatin a copy of a Papal Brief addressed to Cajetan, drawn up and signed in due form, and dated August 23d, in which he found himself treated as an already convicted heretic, whom the Legate, unless in case of complete repentance and recantation, was ordered to arrest and send to Rome. The authenticity of this Brief, which we know in no other way than that above stated, will be discussed elsewhere.[1] Luther's first thought was to treat it as spurious. Possibly, on reflection, he changed his mind; it answered to the vague apprehensions that had filled the air at Augsburg; and, at all events, until repudiated by the Curia, it was a document of which good argumentative use might fairly be made in the controversy. His first business, on reaching home, was to prepare a report of all that had happened at Augsburg, with illustrative papers, among which this Brief, accompanied by an indignant commentary, took its place. His own mood was that heroic one to which past difficulties and dangers seem of small account. "I am full of joy and peace," he writes to Spalatin, "so that I wonder that this trial of mine should have seemed anything great to many and great men." Still his position was doubtful and perplexing. He could not conceal from himself that he was practically a rebel against the authority of the Pope; would Frederick, as a good, a peace-loving, an orthodox prince, throw the shield of his protection over him? No one could suppose that he would be safe except upon Saxon soil; would he be told to betake himself elsewhere?[2]

The answer to these questions soon came. Cajetan wrote to the Elector a letter, which, though dated October 25th, was not delivered till November 19th, in which he gave his own account of the transactions at Augsburg, and asked that Frederick should consult for his own honour and conscience by either sending Luther to Rome or at all events by expelling him from Saxony. This letter the Elector at once loyally sent to Luther, who immediately replied, not only controverting the Cardinal's account of the facts, but reasserting his own position. He again asked that his errors might be pointed out and proved to be erroneous; he pleaded that he might not be

[1] This brief will be found Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 354. See Note B at the end of the chapter, p. 257.

[2] De W. vol. i. p. 166.

sent to certain death at Rome, "where not even the chief Pontiff himself lives in safety"; he painted the misery and danger of banishment from Saxony. Still he is sincerely anxious that his errors and offences, whatever they may be, shall not inflict a stain upon the fair fame of the Elector, whom the world may unjustly regard as his abettor, and in that view he is willing to sacrifice himself. "Wherefore," he says, "lest in my name any evil should befall your illustrious Lordship, which is of all things what I least wish, lo, I leave your territory, to betake myself whither a merciful God may will, and trusting myself in every event to His divine pleasure. For there is nothing I desire less than that any man, and least of all your illustrious Lordship, should on my account be led into any odium or peril." For a little while his fate and the fate of the Reformation trembled in the balance. He thought he would go to France, where the University of Paris, true to its old traditions, had lately protested against the abridgment, by the Lateran Council, of the liberties of the Gallican Church. Once, on the very point of departure, he assembled his friends for a farewell meal, when a letter came from Spalatin, which changed his purpose. On another occasion there was a momentary foreshadowing of that scheme of a friendly arrest and concealment which was actually carried into effect after the Diet of Worms. But the Elector's better genius prevailed, and he wrote to Cajetan on the 8th of December, enclosing Luther's letter, and at the same time distinctly refusing to withdraw his protection from a man who was not yet proved to be a heretic. Had Luther been so convicted, he would have known how to do his duty as a Christian prince, without external exhortation or admonition; as it was, he would not run the risk of wrecking his University. The situation, in its political aspect, was practically the same as before the audience at Augsburg.[1]

In the meantime, however, Luther had made another step in advance. Dissatisfied with the appeal *ad Papam melius informandum* which he had lodged with Cajetan at Augsburg, he replaced it by one to a future General Council, to be lawfully

[1] De W. vol. i. pp. 187, 189, 195. Enders, vol. i. pp. 268, 309, 310. Oben- ander's MS. quoted by Seidemann, *Theol. Stud. u. Krit.* 1878, p. 705.

called and held in a safe place, where he should himself have free coming and going. This he formally completed, in that chapel of Corpus Christi, which still stands in the churchyard at Wittenberg, on the 28th of November, in the presence of a notary and witnesses. To some extent this appeal must be taken as the logical consequence of the Brief of the 23d of August, which Luther had now resolved to treat as a genuine document. If the Pope could thus condemn him unheard, what advantage in appealing to him better instructed? But it would perhaps be too much to infer from this appeal that Luther had adopted any distinct theory of the infallibility of councils, or the precise relation in which they stood to Pope and Church. There is evidence to show that he was not unacquainted with the conflict of opinion on this subject, which had existed since the breaking up of the Council of Basel, and that he sympathised with the freer tendency, still represented by the University of Paris. Indeed his appeal to a General Council was drawn up on the lines of one which that body had made, on the 27th of March 1517, against the abrogation by the Lateran Council of the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, and in some cases actually adopted its phraseology. But the fact that it may fairly be doubted whether he would have submitted to the adverse judgment of a council, even had it fulfilled all the conditions which he had laid down, shows that in regard to this important subject his mind was in a state of transition. Not, however, that he was steadily thinking the matter out from point to point, and so able at any given moment to express himself without inconsistency. The living germ of his theology, which was perpetually demanding room for growth and expansion, was essentially subjective, the consciousness of an inward change wrought in himself by forces the reality of which it was impossible to question, and which in their very nature could not be subordinated to any others. Almost from month to month he discerns new applications of this great principle: but the process of change is half unconscious, and he has not yet reduced his convictions to logical form, or ascertained their relations to one another. The chief thing with him at this moment is that he cannot expect fair trial from a Pope; and he appeals to a free council. But he

has already laid it down that councils can err. The question of an absolute basis of authority is plainly still in the future.[1]

The *Acta Augustana*, in which Luther told his Augsburg story, were published on the 11th of December, very much against the Elector's will. He had interposed to forbid the printing when it was too late; all he could do was to have one passage scored through and made illegible, which has since exercised much ingenuity of conjecture.[2] So in like manner, and about the same time, the Appeal made its escape from the printing press. Is it fair to conjecture that if the injunction not to publish had been very seriously intended, it would, at such a moment as this, have been rigorously obeyed? The whole policy of these days may be summed up in one phrase: to combine a decent liberty of action for Luther with the least possible responsibility for Frederick. However this may be, the case, stated fully and without passion, was now before the world. And the Catholic Church completed it by a new Decretal, in which Leo X, addressing Cajetan, reaffirmed the doctrine of Indulgences, in opposition to all recent cavillers.[3]

[1] Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 34; Löscher, vol. i. p. 554.

[2] *Vide* Note B, at the end of the chapter.

[3] De W. vol. i. pp. 149, 160, 169, 174, 195, 198; vol. vi. p. 8. Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 428.

NOTE (A) TO PAGE 211.

IN order to form the estimate given in the text, I have studied more or less assiduously five monographs on Tetzel. The earliest in date is that of Vogel (2d. ed.), 1727. This is Protestant. The next is that of Gröne (2d. ed.), 1860, a Catholic rehabilitation. To this succeeds a Protestant reply by Körner, 1880, answered again by Hermann (2d. ed.), 1883. To these may be added a pamphlet, *Geschichtsquellen über den Ablassprediger Tetzel*, by Kayser, 1877. Apart from the view of Tetzel's character, and the common admission that stories have been told of him which belong to the indulgence-monger in general (one as old as Boccaccio), the controversy revolves round one or two principal points. (1) Was Tetzel, at some date which it is impossible to fix, condemned at Innsbruck to be drowned in the Inn for the crime of adultery, rescued by the intercession of Frederick the Wise, and his punishment commuted to imprisonment for life at Leipzig, whence he escaped to preach the indulgences of 1517? The strongest evidence for this story, which plainly was in general circulation (Mathesius, p. 10 A), is derived from a statement made by Luther in 1541. In the book *Wider Hans Wurst* (Erl. Deutsche Schriften, vol. xxvi. p. 68), in which he gives an account of the beginning of the controversy, he speaks of "a preaching monk, by name Johannes Detzel, a great shouter, whom Duke Frederick had formerly liberated from the sack at Innsbruck, for Maxi-

milian had condemned him to be drowned in the Inn (you may well suppose on account of his great virtue). And Duke Frederick caused him to remember that, when he began to abuse us Wittenbergers; also he freely confessed it." This is a piece of positive testimony not easy to get over, except on the supposition that Luther would stick at no calumny that would blacken an opponent's character. On the other hand, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to fit in the story with what we know of Tetzel's life. (2) Did Tetzel declare in his preaching, that if any one had violated the Mother of God the indulgence which he offered would avail to wipe away the sin? Such was indisputably the report in his own lifetime; the shocking accusation plays a part both in Luther's Theses and Tetzel's Antitheses. Luther, in his *Resolutiones* (Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 622), which may be taken to express his deliberate opinion, says that although it was asserted by many men of name that it had been so preached in many places, he himself "marvelled rather than believed." He adds, however, that it was not wonderful that the people should have understood some such thing when they heard great and horrible sins treated as of no account, in comparison with the magnitude of the indulgence. On the other hand, it is evident that two certificates, one from temporal, the other from ecclesiastical authorities at Halle (first published by Seidemann, *Erläuterungen*, p. 1), to the effect that they had never heard Tetzel use the incriminated phrase, nor had been told of his using it by others, are good only as negative and partial evidence. That Tetzel, however, asked for these certificates shows that he was ashamed of the accusation and anxious to deny it. Probably the fairest thing is to withdraw the sentence from history as not fully authenticated, with the double remark that the report could hardly have become current unless there had been a strong element of probability in it, and that it is difficult to limit the excess to which a popular preacher addressing an ignorant audience on such a subject might easily be led. (3) There is an undoubted Catholic witness against Tetzel. A letter is extant from Miltitz, the Papal Chamberlain, who in 1519 was sent to Saxony to compose the Lutheran difficulty, to Degenhard Pfeffinger, in which, after an interview with Tetzel in the presence of the Dominican Provincial, he declares him guilty of having made a purse for himself out of the indulgence, and says that he has two children. The force of this authoritative accusation is hardly evaded by the Catholic apologists, who accuse Miltitz of the common German vice of drunkenness, and narrate with some gusto that he was at last drowned in the Rhine or Main (Körner, p. 121).

NOTE (B) TO PAGES 253, 256.

In the *Acta Augustana*—the collection of documents relative to the hearing in Augsburg, which Luther published early in December 1518—is found a Brief addressed by Leo X to Cardinal Cajetan, dated August 23, 1518, and signed "Jacobus Sadoletus." It is, if genuine, an important document, reciting the appointment of the Bishop of Ascoli as judge in Luther's case, but going on to say, that as the said Luther had abused the Papal benignity by publishing other heretical books, Cajetan should, with help of the secular arm, take him into custody, until, in pursuance of further instructions, he should present him before the Pope in Rome. If, indeed, Luther voluntarily repented, the power of reconciling him to the Holy See was given to the Legate, who was at the same time armed with all the terrors of the Church against the favourers and abettors of the heretic, no matter of what rank (Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 23, *Acta Augustana*). This Brief is not known to history in any other way than as published by Luther. When at Nürnberg, on his way home from Augsburg, about the end of October, he received a copy of it from Spalatin. His first impulse was to treat it as unauthentic. "It is incredible," he writes to Spalatin (De W. vol. i. p. 166), "that a monster of such a kind should have proceeded from the Supreme Pontiff, above all, from Leo X." On further consideration he seems to have changed his opinion, for he published it in the *Acta Augustana* with brief but indignant comment. It is not without significance, however, first, that the Elector objected to the publication of the *Acta* at all, and next, that, when his

objection came too late, the first lines of Luther's comment on the Brief were, in the first edition, scored out with a pen, and in all subsequent ones omitted. More than one attempt has been made to read them, with the probable result, that in the obliterated passage Luther accused Ghinucci of having, with Cajetan's connivance, forged the Brief (conf. Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 1 *seq.*).

Ranke, in the supplementary volume of his *German History in the Age of the Reformation*, was the first to point out the difficulties in the way of accepting this Brief as genuine. The Papal citation reached Luther on the 7th of August: it gave him sixty days to appear in Rome. But if this Brief is to be relied upon, within sixteen days, and in his absence, Luther had been already condemned: "dictum Martinum haereticum per praedictum auditorem jam declaratum." Such a proceeding is so contrary, not only to every principle of justice, but to all legal forms, especially in a Court noted, like the Roman Curia, for its dilatoriness, as to be incredible. But it is still further inconsistent with the letter which, on the 25th of October, Cajetan wrote to the Elector. In it he distinctly says that Luther's case is not yet decided (Enders, vol. i. p. 271) "Illud sciat Illustrissima Dominatio Vestra, nequaquam hoc tam grave et pestilens negotium posse diu haerere, nam Romae prosequentur causam, quando ego lavi manus meas, et ad Sanctissimum Dominum, Dominum nostrum, hujuscemodi fraudes scripsi." It is worth noting that Pallavicini (*Hist. Conc. Trid.* lib. i. cap. ix. § 3) accepts the Brief as genuine. It is true that he gives Luther himself as his authority: on the other hand, his statement of the contents of the document shows that he finds in it nothing improbable or incredible *per se*. On the whole, however, it is certainly safer to treat the Brief as not authentic. (Conf. Kolde, *Luther's Stellung zu Concil und Kirche, Anhang*, p. 1, in which he defends the authenticity of the Brief. Also Waltz, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. ii. p. 623, who takes the other side.) This is probably the best place to mention a strange document, which has recently been brought to light by Kolde (*Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. ii. p. 472). It comes from a MS. volume at Munich, containing records of the Augustinian Order in Germany; and is only a copy, of which the original has not yet been found. It is a letter dated August 25, 1518 (two days later, therefore, than the Brief above discussed), from Gabriel Venetus, the General of the Augustinians, to Gerhard Hecker, the Saxon Provincial, in which he requires him to seize Luther, and to keep him ironed, in the straitest custody. I quote the exact words, "Iccirco mandamus sub paena privationis omnium tuorum graduum, dignitatum, et officiorum, ut praefatum fratrem Martinum Luther his acceptis capi et incarcerari cures, faciasque in vinculis, compedibus, et manicis ferreis ad instantiam summi domini nostri Leonis Decimi sub arta custodia detineri: Cum vero is de congregatione illa sit quae ab obedientia nostra se exemptam putat, ut nullus tergiversandi sibi relinquatur locus, damus propterea tibi in ea parte omnem nostram autoritatem significamusque S. D. N. Papam communicasse tibi autoritatem, apostolicam, amplissimam ad hominem hunc incarcerandum, vinciendum, detinendumque non obstantibus quibuscunque in contrarium facientibus" (p. 477). In view of the strict discipline that was enforced within the monastic orders, and the rough treatment of personal rights and liberties often shrouded in conventual silence and seclusion, it can hardly be said that this document should be rejected as containing matter *per se* incredible. Perhaps, however, till the original is forthcoming, it ought not to be admitted as historical evidence. Waltz (*ubi supra*) boldly pronounces it a forgery, adducing one or two internal difficulties, which are not, however, of any great importance. On the other hand, Kolde returns to the charge in the 3d appendix of his book on Staupitz, and certainly scores a point in referring to a letter from Staupitz to the Elector, dated October 15, 1518 (p. 443), and to another of Luther's (De W. vol. i. p. 182), both of which allude to current report in accord with the General's alleged letter. Luther's words are—he is speaking of the time when he was in Augsburg—"Taceo quod rumor circumferebatur, permissum esse a Reverendo Patre Generali, me capiendum et in vincula, nisi revocarem, conjiciendum."

CHAPTER VI

THE YEAR 1519: FRIENDS AND FOES

NOTWITHSTANDING the distraction of mind which was the necessary result of the controversies in which Luther found himself ever more deeply involved, his thoughts, during the year 1518, of which we have just told the story, were often occupied with the welfare and development of the University. No provision had yet been made at Wittenberg for teaching either Greek or Hebrew, languages equally essential to the student, whether education be regarded from the humanist or the purely theological point of view. This want was largely supplied by the arrival of a teacher, who, though still very young, was looked upon as the rising hope of German scholarship, Philip Melanchthon. At first he undertook to lecture in both languages, until after a little while a Hebrew teacher was found in the person of John Böschenstein, who in 1521 was succeeded by Matthew Aurogallus, Luther's colleague in the translation of the Old Testament. Wittenberg soon knew that it had acquired in Melanchthon not only an accomplished scholar but a great systematising theologian; while he took his place at Luther's side as the friend and lieutenant without whose help the Reformation would have been other than it was.

Philip Schwartzerd was born on the 16th of February 1497 at Bretten, then a village of the Palatinate, but now included in the Grand Duchy of Baden. He was thus fourteen years younger than Luther. His father, George Schwartzerd, was an armourer, a native of Heidelberg, who stood high in the favour of the princes of the land, and had had the honour

of making a suit of armour for the Emperor Maximilian. His mother was Barbara Reuter, the daughter of John Reuter, a citizen of good standing, whose wife Elizabeth was the sister of the great scholar, John Reuchlin. Three daughters and two sons, of whom Philip was the eldest, were the offspring of this marriage. The household was at once a pious and a happy one; George Schwartzerd was a master of his craft; there was no lack of worldly wealth, and the spirit of old Catholic devotion pervaded the family. More than one domestic tradition survives to show that a moral feeling, which had much of ancient simplicity and seriousness in it, regulated the relations between parents and children. But in 1507 the home was broken up by the death of the father. In 1504, when war was raging between Bavaria and the Palatinate, he had been sent, in the pursuit of his calling, to Monheim, and there, it was thought, had drunk of a poisoned well. From that time his health gradually failed, until, three years afterwards, he succumbed to his malady. John Reuter, who would otherwise have been the stay of the family, had died eleven days before, and his widow, Elizabeth Reuchlin, went back to her native place, Pforzheim, taking with her, for purposes of education, her three grandsons, John Reuter and Philip and George Schwartzerd.[1]

Philip's education had already begun at Bretten, where he was sent to the common school at a very early age. His grandfather, however, dissatisfied with the master, and possibly discerning the rare promise of the boy, had applied to his brother-in-law Reuchlin for a tutor, and at his recommendation had placed Philip in the hands of John Unger, a native of Pforzheim, who, besides being learned in theology and medicine, had a competent knowledge of the classical languages. By his searching and severe method Philip was thoroughly furnished with the rudiments of Latin scholarship. The lesson usually consisted of twenty or thirty lines taken from Baptista

[1] In 1557 Melanchthon writes, "Ante sexaginta annos meus pater mihi descripsit γενέθλια curavit a *Palatini* mathematico viro ingeniosa *Hasfurto*, amico suo. In ea praedictione diserte scriptum est, itinera me ad Boream periculosa habiturum esse, et me in mari *Baltico* naufragium facturum esse. Saepe miratus sum, cur mihi nato in collibus *Rheno* vicinis praedixerit pericula in Arctoo Oceano. Nec volui eo accedere vocatus in *Britanniam* et in *Daniam*." *Corp. Ref.* vol. ix. p. 189.

Mantuanus, the Italian poet, whose fame for a time almost approached that of the older and greater Mantuan; and the boy was required to define accurately the meaning of every word, and its relation to the sentence in which it stood. "As often as I made mistakes, he beat me," said Melanchthon long afterwards, "and so made me a grammarian. Very often I was thrashed two or three times in a lesson; he loved me as a son, and I in turn him as a father; and I hope that before long we shall meet in the life eternal."[1] We must not conclude from these castigations that the boy was slow or unwilling to learn: blows, as Luther too found out, were then looked upon as an essential part of the schoolmaster's method. Indeed, everything points to a singular precocity in the lad; we are told that when wandering scholars came to Bretten his grandfather would set him to dispute with them, which he did to the admiration of the bystanders and the shame of the discomfited antagonists. The scene is not difficult to reproduce in imagination: the boy, grave and instructed beyond his years, the wondering relatives, the neighbours gathering round in friendly admiration, and the rough "Bachanten" quite willing to purchase a night's hospitality from the Burgomaster of Bretten at the price of a dialectical defeat from his grandson.

At Pforzheim Philip attended the school of George Simler, an excellent scholar, who had been a pupil of Dringenberg's at Schlettstadt, and who afterwards studied in the University of Köln. Simler had some knowledge of Greek, which he imparted to his favourite pupils, Melanchthon among the rest. It was now that the boy fell directly under the influence of his great uncle, Reuchlin, then, next to Erasmus, the first of German scholars, and in his knowledge of Hebrew superior even to the Master of Rotterdam. Coming to Pforzheim to visit his sister, Reuchlin noticed him, took pleasure in his progress, gave him books, and, by way of jocose encouragement, put his own doctor's cap on his head. Philip, on the other hand, delighted the heart of the old scholar by preparing for one of his visits a representation of his Latin comedy, the *Sergius*, by himself and his schoolmates. It was upon this occasion that Reuchlin,

[1] Waltz, *Dicta Melanthonis, Zeitsch. für K. G.* vol. iv. p. 327. Conf. *Corp. Ref.* vol. xxv. p. 448.

whose own name Hermolaus Barbarus had græcised into Capnio, translated Schwartzerd into Melanchthon, a name of happy omen, and one that has gained an undying renown. No attempt was ever made to furnish Luther with a classical appellation; and the conjunction of his name with that of Melanchthon may serve to keep in recollection the fact that the humanist element so powerful in the one was all but absent in the other.[1]

In October 1509 Melanchthon, not yet thirteen years of age, matriculated in the University of Heidelberg, where, something less than two years afterwards, he proceeded Bachelor of Arts. In after years he did not think much of the instruction which he received there. The days when Dalberg, Rudolf Agricola, and Conrad Celtes had endeavoured to make Heidelberg a seat of the newer learning, in opposition to the obscurantism of Köln, had passed, and the old scholastic methods were in full vogue. Nothing was taught to the studious youth, says Melanchthon, but "that garrulous dialectic, and a little physics." He read Latin literature diligently, but without much distinction between the ancient authors and their modern imitators, and so, as he complains, missed in the unconscious formation of his style the classic grace and precision. From the first, astronomy, which was then little better than astrology, exercised a strong attraction upon him, and his curiosity was partly gratified by the lectures of one Conrad, a Swiss, who had studied at Köln. When we are told that he drew upon himself the notice of Wimpheling, and conceived a strong admiration for Geiler, it is easy to forget that he was only a boy, of great capacity, indeed, and with unusual stores of information, upon whom, for his great uncle's sake, the scholars of an elder generation looked with kindness. He did not stay long at Heidelberg. When in 1512, at the age of fifteen, he applied for the degree of Master of Arts, and was told that he was too young to receive it, he shook the dust off his feet against his father's native city, and, under the pretext that the air of the place was injurious to his health, removed to Tübingen.[2]

[1] According to Carl Schmidt, Melanchthon wrote his name as we have given it till 1531; afterwards, for euphony's sake, Melanthon.

[2] *Corp. Ref.* vol. iii. p. 673; vol. iv. p. 715; vol. x. p. 469; vol. xx. p. 765.

The University of Tübingen, which had been founded in 1477 by Duke Eberhard with the Beard, was still largely pervaded by the old scholastic spirit, though the new learning had its eager representatives. The one name in its list of professors which has a claim to a place in the annals of the German Renaissance is that of Bebel, the author of the *Facetiae* and the *Triumphus Veneris*, both books in which the popular and anti-ascetic elements of the movement were vividly reflected. But if the names of Brassicanus, Stadianus, Simler, Stöffler, and their fellows are now forgotten, except by a few exact students of the period, there was enough in their lectures to stimulate and occupy a bright lad of fifteen, who already aimed at making all knowledge his province. A friendship with Oekolampadius, whom, though twice his own age, he found a student at Tübingen, seems to have exercised considerable influence over him. Together they read Hesiod, whose *Works and Days* filled him with fresh astronomical curiosity, and sent him to Stöffler's lectures. He also mentions Rudolf Agricola's work on dialectics, then recently published, as having given him a new view of that study. It not only impelled him to read the orations of Demosthenes and Cicero, but helped him to gain a clear insight into their merits. He threw himself into the prevalent Nominalism of the place in the study of Occam. His knowledge of Greek enabled him to learn something of Aristotle at first hand. He attended lectures on medicine, and read Galen for himself. Under two now forgotten teachers he studied jurisprudence and the Canon Law. He added theology to the list of his intellectual acquirements, though rather for the sake of universality than from any goodwill to a science which was taught only in a dull scholastic way, and little dreaming that in after life he was to win his own greenest laurels as a theologian. And the reward of this assiduous and varied study was that in January 1514 he was admitted Master of Arts, the first among eleven competitors for the degree.[1]

It is curious to note how the boy of seventeen plunges at once into the labours of the literary life. Thomas Anshelm, a well-known printer, had an office at Tübingen, and Melanch-

[1] *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. pp. 26, 321, 1083; vol. iv. pp. 716, 720; vol. xii. p. 243; vol. xxiv. p. 118.

thon became his corrector of the press. In this capacity he edited the chronicle of Nauclerus, not merely purging it of typographical errors, but correcting, adding, rearranging, as occasion required.[1] When in March 1514 the *Clarorum Virorum Epistolae* issued from Anshelm's press, to the succour of Reuchlin, then sorely beset by Pfefferkorn and the theologians of Köln, the prefatory letter was written by Melanchthon. In 1515 we find him producing an edition of Terence, which claims the merit of being the first—a curious commentary on the Latin scholarship of the age—so printed as to indicate the metrical structure. But it would be a tedious task to enumerate the prefaces, the dissertations, the Latin epigrams, the Greek odes which flowed from Melanchthon's facile pen. Like his later productions they indicate the workman rather than the artist; they show the foundations of learning rather than the beginnings of taste. But, in combination, perhaps, with their author's relationship to Reuchlin, they drew upon him the attention of learned Germany in a quite extraordinary way. The young scholar of Tübingen was talked of even in Rome, where literary cardinals asked what he was doing. What compliment could be higher than to be mentioned in terms of praise by Erasmus? The great scholar, in his Annotations on the New Testament, introduced an all but rapturous allusion to the learning and literary merits of one whom he describes as "almost a boy." The student will not find the compliment there now; it appeared in the first edition of 1516, but it was withdrawn when Melanchthon went to join Luther at Wittenberg.[2]

The next two years Melanchthon passed at Tübingen,

[1] This statement rests on the authority of Veit Winsheim, who makes it in a funeral oration which he pronounced at Melanchthon's funeral (*C. R.* vol. x. p. 188). It is, however, now doubted, on the strength of certain typographical indications, whether Nauclerus's Chronicle was among the books for which Melanchthon corrected the press: and the theory has been advanced that there is a confusion here with the Chronicle of Cario, which, at a later period of his life, he undoubtedly edited (*Vide* Spiess, *Forschungen zur Deutschen Geschichte*, vol. xxvi. p. 138).

[2] "At deum immortalem, quam non spem de se praebet, admodum etiam adolescens, ac pene puer, Philippus ille Melanchthon, utraque literatura pene ex aequo suspiciendus! Quod inventionis acumen! Quae sermonis puritas! quanta reconditarum rerum memoria! Quam varia lectio! Quam verecunda regiaeque prorsus indolis festivitas." *Erasmi Annotationes*, 1 Thess. ii. 7 (first edition of 1516), fol. 555.

Corp. Ref. vol. i. p. 9; vol. x. p. 192. *Clar. Vir. Epp.* (Paul Gereander to Reuchlin), fol. B iii.

engaged partly in teaching, partly in literary occupations of the kind which we have described. But he was growing tired of a place where, he said, "it was a capital offence to touch polite literature." "It was no better than a prison to him: among boys, he felt as if he were becoming a boy again." While he was in this mood, Reuchlin received a letter from the Elector Frederick, stating that he intended to establish chairs of Greek and Hebrew in the University of Wittenberg, and asking for a recommendation of fit teachers. Reuchlin answered that he was too old and Wittenberg too far off to accept the Elector's invitation in his own person, but that he put forward in his place his "dear cousin, Master Philip Schwartzerd," whom he had already refused to the University of Ingolstadt. There was no need of further negotiation: Melanchthon put himself absolutely at his uncle's disposal. "Have no doubt at all about the matter," wrote Reuchlin to the Elector on the 25th of July, "I know no German who is before him, except Erasmus Roterodamus, who is a Dutchman. He indeed surpasses us all in Latin." On the other hand, the old scholar's delight in thus opening his young kinsman's way to honourable work and possible fame is quite touching. He addresses him as "my Philip, my work, and my consolation." He exhorts him in Scripture phrase, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house into a land that I will show thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing." Whether Tübingen at large knew what it was losing we cannot tell; Simler, Melanchthon's old schoolmaster, who was now a professor there, said, that whatever learned men there were in the university, they were not learned enough to appreciate the erudition of their departing colleague. With this testimony Melanchthon, in August, set out for Augsburg, where Maximilian was then holding his last Diet. Having there made the acquaintance of Frederick, and his chaplain Spalatin, he went next to Nürnberg, where he was the guest of Scheurl and Pirckheimer, and finally, by way of Leipzig, arrived at Wittenberg on the 25th of August. Everywhere he met with the friendliest reception from scholars; at Leipzig, the professors tried to detain him

among themselves, telling him that the hundred gulden a year promised him at Wittenberg was too small a stipend. But Melanchthon would listen neither to these blandishments nor to a renewed invitation which reached him from Ingolstadt: he had set his heart upon Wittenberg, and to Wittenberg he loyally gave his life.[1]

He was duly inscribed in the matriculation book of the University on the 26th of August, and three days afterwards delivered his inaugural address, "de corrigendis adolescentiae studiis," to a large and delighted audience. His personal appearance was hardly prepossessing; if Albert Dürer and Lukas Cranach are to be trusted, a towering brow and an aquiline nose gave an impression of strength which the lower part of the face did not confirm: he had a slight stammer, he carried one shoulder higher than the other, and embarrassment showed itself in twitching eyebrows and nervous gesticulations. But there was no doubt of the effect which he produced. Luther wrote to both Spalatin and Lange in the warmest terms of the new Professor. So long as he can have him, he declares that he wants no other teacher of Greek. On the other hand, Melanchthon plunged into his work not only with the industry that was characteristic of him, but with the eagerness of new expectations and a fresh start in life. He sends to Spalatin a long list of publications which are to appear within the year. He not only lectures on Greek, on physics, on the exposition of the New Testament, but until a Hebrew teacher appears on the scene on that language also. He sends for a copy of the Hebrew Bible from Leipzig; in conjunction with Luther he procures the invitation to Wittenberg of the printer Melchior Lotter, who has a fount of Greek types. The effect of the new impulse given by Melanchthon to the studies of the place was soon seen; in May 1519 Luther writes that students were pouring in like a flood.[2]

✓ It must not be forgotten that Melanchthon went to Wittenberg as a humanist. So far as he had studied theology it had rather repelled than attracted him. His relationship to

[1] *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. pp. 31, 680. Reuchlin's *Briefwechsel*, ed. Geiger, pp. 289, 294, 302, 303. *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. p. 41; vol. x. p. 299.

[2] *Album Acad. Vitab.* p. 73; *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. p. 43; vol. x. pp. 299, 531; vol. xi. p. 15; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 135, 141, 257, 278, 279; vol. vi. p. 15.

Reuchlin, and the part which, though so young, he had taken in his quarrel with the theologians of Köln, had procured him a place in the *Letters of the Obscure Men*. In Master Philip Schlauraff's *Carmen Rithmicale*, in which that worthy describes his adventures among the humanists of Germany, we read: "Then I went to Tübingen, where many companions live who make new books, and vilipend the theologians. Among whom the most violent of all, as I found out, is Philip Melanchthon; wherefore I made a vow to God, that if I could see him dead I would go on pilgrimage to St. James." Nor did Melanchthon to the last lose his interest in pure literature; we shall find him by and by deeply lamenting that at Wittenberg theology pushed it aside. His contributions to an accurate knowledge of classical languages and literature were incessant, and justly earned for him the title of "Praeceptor Germaniae." But he could not resist, perhaps did not wish to resist, the fascination of Luther, with whom he was soon united in a close and tender friendship. Before he has been at Wittenberg many months he seriously thinks of leaving it again should Luther be compelled to go away; while in June 1519 we find him accompanying his friend to that disputation at Leipzig which did so much to define and confirm his rebellion against the Pope. But the price which he paid for his adhesion to the Reform was the loss of Reuchlin's friendship. Of any correspondence which may have taken place between them after Melanchthon's settlement at Wittenberg only one letter remains, in which the younger man declined to follow the fortunes of the elder at the University of Ingolstadt. This seems to have been the occasion of avowed alienation between them; Reuchlin asked Melanchthon not to write to him again, and bequeathed his library, which he had promised to his nephew, to his native town of Pforzheim. It was the act of an old, a broken, a disappointed man, who had been the mark of a persecution which he felt to be undeserved, and saw the age leaving him behind. But it was not worthy of Melanchthon that when Reuchlin died, he should have passed by in silence an event which ought to have touched him nearly. When, in 1523, he alluded, in a letter to Spalatin, to the fate of his uncle's library, it was to depreciate its value; and he added the cold comment, "I never

promised myself any but common benefits from Reuchlin, although there was an old friendship between our families, and he seemed to love me very heartily." Without going so far as to say that Melanchthon was disloyal to his friends, there was in him at times a certain querulous self-regard which was at least inconsistent with generous judgment.[1]

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance, at this moment, of the direction and impulse given to the studies of Wittenberg by a man who knew Greek as thoroughly as in those days it was possible to know it. Up to this time the influence of the new learning had hardly made itself directly felt at the Saxon University. The fresh breath of inspiration had come wholly from the theological side, out of the fiery soul and vivid personality of Luther. Now, under Melanchthon, Luther himself widened and deepened his knowledge of Greek, for the first time seriously applying himself to the original text of the New Testament, and making it the basis of his exegesis. But as I have already pointed out, he was no humanist at heart, though for a little while he and the humanists found themselves in the same camp; while Melanchthon cared for the classical languages and literature for their own sake, Luther in their cultivation never ceased to have a theological end in view. Presently, when the emotions which had arisen out of the new situation had in some degree spent themselves, a certain difference of feeling between the two friends began to manifest itself. Luther wished to withdraw Melanchthon from lecturing on Greek, which he qualified as "childish," to employ him in teaching theology, while Melanchthon was loud in his complaints of the neglect of classical studies in the University, and the absorption by theology of all interest and industry. Theologian Melanchthon was, and continued to be to the last years of his life, almost in his own despite, and certainly to the destruction of his peace. But the humanist never died out of him; if he had been left to the bent of his own desires, he would have been simply the greatest scholar of his generation, the successor of Erasmus rather than the helpmeet of Luther.[2]

[1] *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. pp. 141, 149, 363, 646; *Epp. Obsc. Vir.* ed. Böcking, vol. i. p. 201; Scheurl, *Briefbuch*, vol. ii. p. 91.

[2] The chief authority for Melanchthon's early life is, besides the funeral orations delivered after his death, collected in *Corp. Ref.* vol. x. p. 177 *et*

The situation in regard to the Pope and the Elector in which Luther found himself at the beginning of the year 1519 was plainly one that could not last. The interview with Cajetan had come to nothing; the Cardinal had demanded unconditional recantation, Luther had asked for fair and formal trial, and neither would accept the other's point of view. The Elector, himself sincerely orthodox, had no desire to shield heretics; but could Luther be justly treated as a heretic until his heresy was proved? He still considered himself a true son of the Church, whose protest was only against manifest corruptions and distortions of her doctrine; while behind him was slowly gathering a great force of popular opinion, perhaps more decisively anti-Roman than himself. On the other hand, the Pope was not willing to put pressure on the Elector, whose age and character gave him great influence in that contention for the succession to the Empire in which the Holy See took so deep an interest. Frederick was nevertheless the next point of attack, if that can be called attack which took the form of blandishment. Even before Cajetan's interview with Luther, Leo had announced his intention of sending to the Elector the Golden Rose, not only the most signal mark of pontifical favour, but one which Frederick had long coveted; and in November 1518 the bearer, Charles von Miltitz, was already on his way to Germany. The relation of his mission to that of Cajetan is by no means clear; he is indeed ordered to submit himself, in all that concerned it, to the Legate; but, as we shall see, he interpreted his instructions in his own way. Probably he was sent with general orders to do what he could, under difficult and complicated circumstances, and suffered them to mould his proceedings into a form not contemplated at Rome.

The ambassador was well chosen. He was one of the twenty-four children of Sigismund von Miltitz, a Saxon nobleman, whose home was in the neighbourhood of Meissen.

seq., and various allusions in his own works, to which reference has been made, the biography written by his friend Camerarius (first published in 1566). 'De Philippi Melanchthonis ortu, totius vitae curriculo, et morte . . . narratio diligens et accurata Joachimi Camerarii.' A valued edition of this work is that edited with notes by G. Th. Strobel, 1777, to whose *Melanchthoniana*, 1771, I may also refer. An elaborate modern life of Melanchthon is that by Dr. Carl Schmidt, Elberfeld, 1861.

Born about 1490, he was educated at Köln, and though only in minor orders, was soon preferred to canonries at Mainz, Trier, and Meissen. He chose, however, to push his fortunes at Rome, where, at an early age, he became Papal Chamberlain, a function with which he united that of agent for the Saxon Courts, acting sometimes for Elector Frederick, sometimes for Duke George. His clerical character seems to have sat very lightly upon him—a fact which did him no injury with Leo. He was an active and enterprising man of business, like too many of his countrymen willing to drink deeply, and not sufficiently on his guard against the treacherous frankness of the wine cup. In short, for the agency of the sumptuous and unyielding churchman, unwilling to bate a jot of his Thomist orthodoxy, was to be substituted that of a cleric who was also a man of the world, knowing how to make concessions if necessary, and by apparent concession to secure the real object in dispute. But the Holy See in no way drew back from its position of uncompromising hostility to Luther. In letters to the Elector, to his minister Degenhard Pfeffinger, and to the Burgomaster and Council of Wittenberg, Leo described him as "the son of perdition," "the son of Satan," whose actions had been instigated by the devil, and whose impudence was damnable. The mailed hand was not indistinctly seen beneath the velvet glove.

Miltitz set out from Italy some time in November 1518; at the beginning of December the rumour of his coming was widely spread among those whom it concerned. He was plainly expected as a messenger of Papal anger: Scheurl wrote to Staupitz, "Miltitz has brought the Rose, and with it briefs by no means rosy, but cruel, horrid, dire." Luther heard that Miltitz's object was to obtain possession of his person, and to deliver him up to the Pope. The envoy's intention had been, in the first instance, to confer with Cajétan; but finding that the Legate had gone into Austria, he resolved to spend a few weeks with his old friend Degenhard Pfeffinger, at his paternal estate in Bavaria, and in talk with him to ascertain how the land lay. What he heard in Germany seems not only to have surprised him but to have changed his tactics. Luther was no infirm old man, as he had supposed, but in the prime of life

and full of energy; wherever he went he found three friends of the rebellious monk for one champion of the Pope. His altered mood is manifest in a two days' talk which he had with Scheurl in Nürnberg about the middle of December, which the latter reported to Luther. He had left behind him at Augsburg, he said, the Golden Rose and his bag of minatory briefs until he saw in what mood Luther and the Elector were. The Pope was by no means as hostile to Luther as might be supposed; he had heard some of the stories about Tetzel with great indignation, and was not at all pleased with Prierias and his share in the controversy. All was yet capable of amicable arrangement; learned discussion of the points at issue he did not so much deprecate as appeal to the vulgar. Nothing for many years had so moved the Papal See, which was sincerely anxious for an accommodation. Pfeffinger, who accompanied Miltitz, added his word from the politician's point of view; if Luther would only give way, a bishopric or some other high ecclesiastical dignity might easily be found for him. Nor, indeed, was the faithful Scheurl unmoved by the blandishments of the Nuncio; he wrote to Luther counsels of prudence: "Your conscience moves you," he says, "to obey Scripture rather than the Pope; but it seems to many that it has been given to the Pope to declare the sense of Scripture; and all things are to be done circumspectly, prudently. . . . If the princes fail you, what will you effect? You have sufficiently shown what you can do; Rome fears you. It has always been the part of a wise man to yield to occasion; other things should be kept for a more convenient season. I agree with the sentiment, it is better to yield with gain than to prevail with loss. These things, Reverend Father, I have written sincerely; I ask that they should be faithfully interpreted by a friend." More briefly, but in the same sense, Scheurl wrote to Spalatin. He plainly thought that the time for mutual concession and accommodation had come.[1]

From Nürnberg Miltitz travelled with Pfeffinger into Saxony, where, in the last days of December, he had interviews, first with Spalatin, and then with the Elector. The result

[1] Scheurl, *Briefbuch*, vol. ii. pp. 63, 71-74; Löscher, vol. ii. p. 566; Erl. ed. *Opp.* v. a. vol. i. p. 21; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 191, 216.

seems to have been a conviction on his part that it was necessary as far as possible to disavow and discredit Tetzel. He sent at once to the indulgence-monger, who was living in monastic retirement at Leipzig, to come to him at Altenburg. Tetzel, in a long and abject letter, excused himself. He could not, he said, leave Leipzig except at the peril of his life, "for Martin Luther, the Augustinian, has so raised up and moved the mighty against me, not only in all German lands but in the kingdoms of Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland, that I am nowhere safe." Miltitz took no notice either of his letter or of one which Hermann Rab, the Dominican Provincial in Saxony, wrote to him on Tetzel's behalf; but about the middle of January went to Leipzig and summoned the monk before him. The result of the investigation—we do not know whether it assumed the shape of a formal trial—was highly unsatisfactory. Miltitz reports in a letter to Pfeffinger that he is fully convinced of Tetzel's mendacity and roguery; that he must be held guilty of having embezzled a part of the proceeds of the indulgence; and that he had two children, a piece of intelligence to which he subjoins a significant "and so on." With very few words more we may dismiss Tetzel from our story. Ashamed and broken, he retired from the presence of the Nuncio to hide his confusion in the convent of his order, and died about six months afterwards, at the very crisis of Luther's disputation with Eck. Not, however, without kindly words from his old opponent, who wrote him a letter of consolation on his deathbed. The letter has perished, but Emser, who alleged that he had seen it, reports that Luther bade Tetzel "be comforted, that the affair had not been begun on his account, but that the child had had quite another father." If this was so, it meant that by that time Luther was beginning to see that his whole theological system was anti-Papal, and that Tetzel's coarse presentation of Roman doctrine had been only the occasion, not the cause, of the strife.[1]

On or about the 6th of January, Miltitz met Luther at Spalatin's house at Altenburg, Fabian von Feilitsch, a trusted

[1] Spalatin ap. Mencken, vol. ii. p. 593; Körner, *Tetzel*, pp. 117, 120; Erl. ed. *Opp.* v. a. vol. i. p. 21; conf. De Wette, vol. i. pp. 223-231; Seidemann, *Die Leipziger Disputation*, p. 56 *note*.

councillor of the Elector's, being also present. The interview was friendly on both sides. If the Nuncio made the same uncompromising demand for a recantation as the Cardinal had done, it was soon withdrawn: a document, drawn up by Luther himself, apparently while the negotiations were in progress, shows that he was never less inclined than at this moment to extenuate or to forgive the share of the Pope and the Elector of Mainz in Tetzel's mission and the scandal which it had caused. But when Miltitz abated something of his high pretensions, Luther showed no reluctance to meet him half-way. At last, after more than one interview, they came to an agreement upon two articles. Both parties were to be forbidden to preach, write, or act further in the matter in dispute. Miltitz was to report to the Pope what he had learned; and to procure the reference of Luther's case to some erudite bishop, who should indicate the points of doctrine in which he had gone astray. "And then," adds Luther, "provided I am instructed of my error, I will willingly recant the same, and no further impugn the honour and power of the holy Roman Church." The meeting was closed by a dinner, and Miltitz took leave of the heretic, whom he hoped he had reduced to silence, with the kiss of peace. But if at the moment he had convinced Luther of his sincerity, the impression soon wore off. Before many days had passed the Reformer contemptuously qualified his flattering speeches as "Italitates," and compared his kiss to the salutation of Judas.[1]

Soon after the interview at Altenburg followed negotiations as to the choice of a bishop who should act as judge in the case. Luther, appealed to by Miltitz, mentioned three: first, Richard von Greiffenklau, Elector Archbishop of Trier; next, Matthew Lang, Archbishop of Salzburg; and finally, the Count Palatine, Bishop of Freisingen and Naumburg. But there were

[1] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 209, 216, 231; vol. vi. p. 9. There are two letters from Luther to the Elector, in which he gives a report of his negotiations with Miltitz, a longer and a shorter, both undated (De Wette, vol. i. pp. 207, 209). The longer, in which *four* articles of agreement are mentioned, is assumed by all the critics to be earlier in date than the shorter, which recounts only *two*. In favour of this view it is to be said that the shorter letter is undoubtedly the more formal. If we adopt the common opinion, we must conclude that, if for some unknown reason the actual treaty was confined to the two articles, the four were not the less considered binding upon the parties, and were in fact acted upon.

other articles of the agreement, perhaps more onerous than those which he had formally reported to the Elector, which he had yet to fulfil. He was to publish a paper in the German language[1] which should make his orthodoxy manifest to the unlearned, and he was to write a submissive letter to the Pope. The first, which was issued at the end of February, was a short but very significant document, referring to six points of belief: the Intercession of Saints, Purgatory, Indulgences, the Commands of Holy Church, Good Works, and the Church of Rome. The saints are to be honoured and invoked, though it is more Christian to ask them for spiritual than for physical aid. Purgatory is to be firmly believed: though what the pain is, and whether it effects amendment as well as satisfaction, neither he, Luther, nor any one else knows. Of indulgences it is enough for a common man to know that they are a release from satisfaction for sin, and a less thing than good works, which we are commanded to perform. God's command is to be esteemed above the Church's command: cursing, swearing, neglecting to help a neighbour, are worse things than to eat flesh on Friday. Both commands, God's and the Church's, are to be kept, yet distinguished with the greatest care. No one can be holy and do good, unless God's grace make him holy; by good works no man becomes holy, but good works are performed only by one who is holy. An evil tree cannot bear good fruit. There is no doubt that the Roman Church is honoured by God above all others; if, unhappily, things at Rome might be better than they are, that is no reason for separation from her. But as to what the precise power and superiority of the Roman Church is, let learned men contend. We should have regard to unity, and not withstand Papal injunctions; and in all things, giving credence to no hypocrite, follow the Holy Roman See. All we can say of this document is, that if it is no recantation, it is at least marvellously like one. Such papers have been written a hundred times by men, who, feeling themselves carried away by a current of heretical thought, have greatly

[1] "Dr. Martinus Luther's Unterricht auf etliche Artikel, die ihm von seinen Abgönnern aufgelegt und zugemessen werden." 1519. Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 66.

desired to attach themselves to some fixed moorings of orthodoxy, and often, too, at the very moment at which they were about to abandon themselves to the force of the stream which bears them onward. In a similar spirit is conceived the letter to Leo X, dated March 3d.[1] It begins with expressions of the most profound submission to the Holy See. It is a great grief to Luther that his attempt to protect the honour of the Church has brought such evil suspicion upon him. But what is to be done? His writings are too widely spread abroad to be recalled. "It is they," he breaks out, "most Blessed Father, they whom I have resisted, who have brought this injury, I might almost say, this infamy, upon the Roman Church among us in Germany; who, speaking most foolishly in the name of your Blessedness, have furthered only the worst avarice, and have made sanctification contaminate and abominable with the opprobrium of Egypt. And as if that were not evil enough, they blame me, who have contended with such monsters, to your Blessedness, as the author of their own temerity." He goes on to say that he has not, nor has ever had, the wish to touch the power of Church or Pope; he believes the might of the Church to be above all other might, Christ only excepted. Provided that his adversaries also are silent, he will say no more about indulgences; his only object has been that the Roman Church, the mother of all, should not be polluted by the foulness of an alien avarice, nor the people be led into the error of believing that indulgences are better than charity. If he can do more than this, he will be most ready to do it.

When we recollect that six weeks before this letter was written Luther had expressed to Scheurl[2] the distrust which he felt of the new decretal, which he had not yet seen, and his resolution to resist it, if, as he expects, it is issued out of the plenitude of Papal authority, without adduction of Scripture or Canons, and that his promise of submission and silence was broken at Eck's provocation almost as soon as made, it is easy to accuse him of conscious and deliberate insincerity. Yet might not this be a mistake arising out of an imperfect insight into the complexity and changefulness of human motives? A rigid

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 233. [2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 211.

consistency is the virtue, if it be a virtue, only of small minds. A great soul, open to the impact of many waves of impulse, balances long before it enters upon an irrevocable course of action, and for a while turns a different face to observers who approach it from different sides. Motives are not always of equal weight; they vary according to the quarter from which they come and the mood on which they operate. We must take into account that Luther's theological principles were only slowly developed out of his own spiritual necessities; that it was long before he discovered what were their logical consequences; that it was a terrible thing for a man to put himself into open opposition to a Church that had been visibly unbroken for centuries; that he was surrounded by friends less clear-sighted, less strong-willed than himself, who besought him not to throw away this chance of peace; that he looked to the Elector, whose fate was in part involved with his own, with grateful respect; that he might well think that he was doing the Church a service in exposing corruptions that struck at her best strength. I have no doubt that Luther was perfectly sincere in his promise to be silent, and perfectly sincere too in his inability to keep silence. His fate was too strong for him. The whole set of his nature, his inmost thoughts, his deepest convictions, irresistibly impelled him in the direction of rebellion, and if for a while more superficial feelings held him back, or an effort of will arrested his progress, the strain could not last. But the apparent changefulness, which is profoundly true to the mood and circumstances of the hour, is no proof of insincerity.[1]

The provocation which induced Luther to break the truce which Miltitz had so laboriously negotiated had long been preparing, and took its origin in the Ninety-five Theses. One of the rising theologians of the day was John Maier, who, from the fact that he was born in the Bavarian village of that name, was commonly known as Eck. He was three years younger than Luther, having been born in 1486, and was, like Luther,

[1] The documents which refer to Miltitz's mission are printed by Löscher, vol. ii. pp. 552-569; vol. iii. p. 6 *et seq.*, and by Tentzel, *Historische Bericht*, vol. ii. p. 53 *et seq.* They are, however, in a confused condition, out of which Seidemann, in his indispensable pamphlet, *Karl von Miltitz, eine Chronologische Untersuchung*, Dresden, 1844, has done much to rescue them.

"a peasant and a peasant's son." At the age of nine he was adopted by his uncle, Martin Maier, the parish priest of Rottenburg on the Neckar, and by him indoctrinated into the learning of the day with such astonishing success that before he was twelve he was able to enter the University of Heidelberg. It is not necessary to follow the details of his university career there, and at Tübingen, Köln, and Freiburg; everywhere he seems to have manifested an astonishing capacity of acquiring knowledge. But he had no corresponding power of distinguishing the traditional from the scientific, the false from the true, which, in an age when canons of certainty are rapidly changing, is necessary, if erudition is to be more than an empty form of words. He was on terms of friendly intercourse with humanists, without having imbibed the spirit of humanism, and only waited for the moment at which the new learning and the old should come into decisive collision to throw in his lot with the latter. His strong point was disputation. He delighted in these academical exercises, for which an imposing presence, a retentive memory, a large command of words, a loud voice, and an unblushing front eminently fitted him. Like the knight-errant of an earlier time he would go far to meet an opponent worthy of his steel, nor, if the lists were fairly measured out and the conditions of combat honourably observed, did it greatly matter to him which side he took. One of the moral problems of the day was the lawfulness of taking interest on money—a practice which the Church qualified as usury. The doctrine was eminently inconvenient to the great financiers, whose operations were beginning to foreshadow the all-powerful exchanges of modern times; and in 1515 Eck travelled to Bologna, paid and recommended by the Fuggers, to defend in public disputation the lawfulness of five per cent. This was the first of the many great dialectical tournaments in which he played a principal part, a prelude to his more serious encounter at Leipzig with Carlstadt and Luther in 1519. He leaves upon the mind the impression of a professional gladiator rather than of a serious theological controversialist. He is strident, arrogant, overbearing; his instincts are those of self-display; he fights more for victory than for truth. In 1517 he was

settled at Ingolstadt as Vice-Chancellor of the University and Professor of Theology; he was in priest's orders and held a canonry in the Cathedral Church of Eichstädt. But he had not yet developed any opposition to the men of Wittenberg. He was the friend and correspondent of Scheurl, and through his introduction had exchanged amicable letters with Luther and Carlstadt. He evidently looked upon them as belonging with himself to the party of what may be called the theological humanists.[1]

A man who bore a superficial likeness to Eck,[2] which, however, veiled an essential dissimilarity, was Andrew Bodenstein, usually, from his Franconian birthplace, called Carlstadt. His age, his parentage, his early training are wrapped in obscurity; it is conjectured rather than known that he was some years older than Luther, and that he had studied in foreign universities. But he was already *Baccalaureus Biblicus* when in 1504 he was invited to the new University of Wittenberg, where we find him in 1507 lecturing *in via S. Thomae*. Then and for some years afterwards he was a pure scholastic, writing books in exposition of his philosophical views, and without any conscious outlook to the coming change. In 1510 he took the degree of Doctor in Divinity; and when, in the same year, Trutvetter went back to Erfurt, he was appointed to succeed him, not only as Professor of Theology, but in the Archdeaconry of the Collegiate Church, to which the revenues of the parish of Orlamünde were attached. Already Carlstadt showed signs of that strangely mixed character which led him into so many distresses and perplexities, and made him a constant centre of unrest to others. His learning was undoubted; Scheurl[3] speaks of him as "great as a philosopher, greater as a theologian, greatest of all as a Thomist," and declares that Wittenberg, had it more Carlstadts, might compete on equal terms with Paris. But with all his gifts he had the irritable self-consciousness which shows itself sometimes in vanity, sometimes in instability, sometimes in desire for repu-

[1] Wiedemann, *Johann Eck*, pp. 1-139. Scheurl, *Briefbuch*, vol. ii. pp. 12, 13, 33.

[2] Scheurl writes to Carlstadt (*B.B.* vol. ii. p. 13): "Eckius Ingolstadiensis, disputator acerrimus, amicus meus, quem in plerisque animi dotibus tibi judicavi similem."

[3] Quoted by Erbkam, p. 177.

tation, sometimes in contentiousness. Self-manifestation was a necessity to him; a Thomist, he expounded Scotus to the Franciscans of Wittenberg; and he had conceived the great idea of uniting theology with jurisprudence in one science. He had quarrelled with his colleagues of the chapter on a question of income, which he refused to submit to the decision of the university court; in 1515 he abandoned his duties to make a pilgrimage to Rome, whence he was only recalled by the Elector's stern warning that in case of his continued absence his income would be sequestrated. On the other hand, there was an eager sincerity in the man which urged him to give practical expression to the convictions of the moment, as well as a clear-sightedness which now and then enabled him to deduce, from principles which they held in common, conclusions which escaped his more famous contemporaries. The fact that he so constantly recovered the respect and influence which he often temporarily forfeited, testifies to the existence of a certain basal moral soundness in him; but he was born in a troubled time, and he lacked the steady balance of character which alone could have enabled him to withstand and rule the storm.[1]

When Carlstadt returned from Rome in 1516 he found Luther's the prevailing influence at Wittenberg, and, still strong in his scholastic preferences, set himself to oppose it. "Carlstadt and Peter Lupinus," says Luther,[2] "were, in the beginning of the Gospel, my most violent opponents; but when I convinced them with disputations, and overcame them with the writings of St. Augustine, and they themselves had read him, they were hotter in the matter than I." There was a little preliminary skirmish between Luther and Carlstadt as to the genuineness of Augustine, *De verâ et falsâ Poenitentiâ*, which the latter asserted and the former denied; but on the 26th of April 1517, the day on which the rich store of relics in the Castle Church was solemnly displayed, we find Carlstadt proposing for disputation a series of 152 Theses, "concerning nature, law, and grace against the Schoolmen," of which Luther

[1] *Album Acad. Viteb.* p. 16; *Lib. Dec.* pp. 8, 9; Strobel, *Neue Beitrage*, vol. iii. pt. 2, p. 66. For Carlstadt see C. F. Jäger, *Andreas Bodenstein von Carlstadt.*

[2] *T. T.* vol. iii. p. 345.

writes to Scheurl in great exultation. From this time Luther and Carlstadt appear as allied forces; Luther mentions in terms of high praise to Spalatin Carlstadt's edition of Augustine's *De Spiritu et Litera*, and when Eck throws down the gauntlet, after the publication of the Ninety-five Theses, it is Carlstadt who rushes forward to take it up. But in Carlstadt the scholastic and the mystic were always strangely blended with the orthodox reformer; and throughout the whole of his troubled life intellectual and spiritual forces, not easily to be reconciled, contended for the mastery of him.[1]

In the year 1518 it happened that Eck paid a visit to Gabriel von Eyb, Bishop of Eichstädt and Chancellor of the University of Ingolstadt. The conversation between them turned on Luther's Ninety-five Theses; and the Bishop asked his Canon to give him his opinion of them in writing. The result was that Eck selected eighteen propositions out of the Theses as worthy of animadversion, and sent them to the Bishop with a running commentary. But the document, which Eck called *Obelisci*, was not printed; Eck himself says that he kept no copy of it, and it was through one or two private hands that it reached Luther. He had, however, received it by the 24th of March, on which date he speaks of it, not without surprise and regret, in a letter to Sylvius Egranus. In all probability he at once composed his answer, *Asterisci Lutheri adversus Obeliscos Eckii*, in which he examined Eck's criticisms one by one. But whether this was printed in a separate form then or afterwards, is uncertain; it is known to us only from the copy contained in the first volume of the Wittenberg edition of Luther's collected works. Most likely he contented himself with sending it to Link, from whom he had received the *Obelisci;* and, notwithstanding the imputation of Hussite heresy, which Eck twice threw out against him, looked upon the affair, perhaps with some passing shade of annoyance, as one of those interchanges of opinion which might well take place between opponents who wished still to be friends. But if Luther shunned, Carlstadt was eager for the fray. In May and June he published a double series of 406 Theses, in which he attacked not only Eck but Tetzel.

[1] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 34, 55, 89; Riederer's *Nachrichten*, vol. iv. p. 63.

There was something of the professional disputant in Carlstadt too; it was intolerable to him that a challenge, direct or indirect, should not be accepted.[1]

These Theses might well be passed over with cursory mention, as only a preliminary step in a controversy which soon grew to larger issues, were it not that they contain the first specific declaration made by the theologians of the Reform of the supreme and final authority of Scripture. In the preface which Carlstadt prefixed to one series of the Theses, the position which he takes up is made sufficiently clear. "Let opinions," he says, "remain opinions, and be nothing but opinions, and not burthens upon Christian backs. Let us not make the opinions of modern theologians equal to articles of faith and the decrees of Christ and Paul." And again, "at last, O theologians, for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, open your eyes, and passing by the opinions of the Schoolmen, passing by all puerile disputations, approach the fountains of the Scripture themselves."[2] Of the Theses, it may be sufficient to quote the 12th:[3] "The text of the Bible is above not one only or many doctors of the Church, but even the authority of the whole Church." But this was followed by many others, not indeed so decisively expressed, but all tending in the same direction. Two years later Carlstadt returned to the subject in an important work, *De Canonicis Scripturis*, which will demand our close attention. At the same time these Theses were a distinctly forward step in the process of revolt against Rome, which is all the more important as having been made by another than Luther. It was the first time that the great assumption of Protestantism had been clearly stated.

Before Carlstadt's *Conclusiones* had appeared, Eck, who had heard of their preparation, endeavoured to ward off the blow by a letter of excuse. His *Obelisci*, he said, had been written in obedience to his ecclesiastical superior, and were not intended for publication; under these circumstances he might

[1] Eck, quoted by Wiedemann, p. 76; De Wette, vol. i. p. 100; Jäger, *Carlstadt*, p. 11; Scheurl tells us (*B.B.* vol. ii. p. 47) that Bernard Adelmann, a canon of Augsburg, where Eck was preacher, communicated the MS. of the *Obelisci* to Luther's friends. Luther received it from Wenzel Link, to whom he addressed the *Asterisci*. Weimar ed. vol. i. pp. 281, 302, 305.

[2] Löscher, vol. ii. pp. 66, 67.

[3] *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 80.

possibly have expressed himself in too strong language; he certainly had not intended to offend Luther; why should they not endeavour to convince one another in private correspondence? But the spirit of the theological gladiator was too strong in Carlstadt to permit him to accept this overture of peace, and the *Conclusiones* were published. Another attempt was made to stay the impending quarrel, this time by Luther, who wrote to Eck, stating that Carlstadt had acted without his knowledge or consent, and begging, that though he must be answered, he should be answered as mildly and moderately as possible. But Eck's *Defence* was hardly conceived in the spirit of this counsel; Carlstadt published a rejoinder; and the controversy, as is the wont of such debates, gradually became more bitter. Eck was particularly annoyed by a satirical woodcut which Carlstadt published, and which was afterwards followed by explanatory letterpress. It represented two carriages, one of which, surmounted by a crucifix and inscribed with appropriate mottoes, was supposed to be taking the way to heaven, while the other, decorated with maxims of the scholastic theology, was faring in an opposite direction. So the dispute went on during those summer months of 1518, in which Luther, summoned to Rome, was negotiating an audience with Cajetan in Augsburg. In Eck's *Defence*, however, occurred a challenge to Carlstadt to hold a public disputation at some University, to be agreed upon, on all the matters in question; an invitation which the latter, regarding with apprehension, as he did, his opponent's skill in the dialectical tourney, thought himself bound in honour to accept. In October Luther was in Augsburg, and there meeting Eck, arranged with him the preliminaries of a formal disputation between him and Carlstadt. More than one University was proposed and rejected as the scene of the duel; at last, subject to the approval of Duke George and the other authorities, ecclesiastical and academical, Leipzig was chosen.[1]

To Leipzig, therefore, both Luther and Eck made respectful application. The first negotiations were, however, unsuccessful.

[1] Löscher, vol. ii. p. 64; Eck's *Defensio*, quoted by Wiedemann, p. 78; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 125, 171, 216; Seidemann, *Leipz. Disp.* p. 22 *et seq.*; Löscher, vol. ii. p. 158.

The theological faculty of the University was unwilling to interfere in so delicate and difficult a matter. It represented to Duke George, to whom Eck had made a personal appeal, that it had already been consulted by the Archbishop of Mainz, and had advised him to refer the dispute between Luther and Tetzel to a synod; that the proposed disputation might annoy the Elector, and breed ill-feeling between him and the Duke; and that the subject of debate, which was plainly Luther's teaching, had already been taken in hand by commissaries of the Pope. Before, however, Eck could have received the unfavourable reply of the Leipzig faculty, he took the field in twelve Theses, which he printed and sent with a letter to Matthew Lang, the Cardinal Archbishop of Salzburg. "In the University of Leipzig Eck will debate the propositions stated below against D. Bodenstein of Carlstadt, Archdeacon and Doctor of Wittenberg." But though Carlstadt was thus the nominal, the Theses themselves left no doubt as to the identity of the real opponent. Indeed, if other proof were wanting it would be supplied by the fact that in Eck's letter to the Archbishop of Salzburg, in which he gives an account of the dispute, he speaks of Carlstadt as "Luther's champion." And Luther at once took up the glove. He published Eck's Theses with counter Theses of his own and a letter to Carlstadt, in which he altogether abandoned the part of mediator which he had up to that moment played, and assailed his opponent with reproaches that were little less than abusive. And as the University of Leipzig would have nothing to do with the debate, he invited Carlstadt to join with him in persuading Duke George to provide place and opportunity for it. This pamphlet, under the title *Disputatio D. Johannis Eccii et P. Martini Lutheri in studio Lipsiensi futura*, Luther sent to Spalatin on the 7th of February 1519. Eck's reply was a republication of his Theses, now made thirteen in number by the addition of one on the subject of free-will, and avowedly directed *contra M. Lutherum*. Carlstadt rejoined by sending to Eck, with a letter, dated April 26th, in which even the pretence of courtesy was thrown aside, seventeen Theses, which he proposed to defend at Leipzig, and Luther followed with a *Disputatio et excusatio F. Martini Luther adversus criminationes D. Johannis*

Eccii, in which he too enlarged his twelve theses to thirteen. This, with Eck's last pamphlet, he sent to John Lange on the 16th of May. The conditions of the combat were thus finally settled, but what and where were the lists in which it was to be fought out?[1]

For many reasons Eck had acted prudently in preferring Leipzig to Erfurt as the place of disputation. The University was a well-known seat of orthodoxy. The occasion of its foundation in 1409 was the dissension which arose in the University of Prag between the Bohemian and the German students; its founder, Frederick the Warlike, had won his chief military fame in the Hussite wars, and it had assumed from the first an attitude of opposition to ecclesiastical innovation. It did not cordially welcome the new learning; no distinguished humanist would stay long at Leipzig; something in the academical air impelled them to seek more congenial abodes. Its theological professors enjoyed rich canonries at Meissen, Zeitz, and Merseburg, often taking refuge in these pleasant places from the irksome duties of teaching, which they left to unendowed Masters and Bachelors. Not even from their own scholastic point of view did they understand their business. "There was not a professor at Leipzig," said Luther,[2] "who understood a single chapter of the Gospel, or the Bible, or even of Aristotle." These were the divines who looked unfavourably upon Eck's and Luther's request for a disputation; they had no desire to give unnecessary publicity to the new doctrines, and shunned the labour and excitement which the debate would bring upon them. In this attitude they were supported by the Chancellor of the University, the Bishop of Merseburg, Prince Adolphus of Anhalt; not only for various good reasons which seemed to him sufficient, but in pursuance of express instructions from the Pope, he forbade the disputation to be held. But the University, a wider body than the Theological Faculty, and in this instance not of one mind with it, successfully appealed to the Duke against this decision. In a highly characteristic letter[3] Duke George complained to the Bishop of his theologians; they did not want

[1] Seidemann, *L. D.* App. 7, p. 113; De Wette, vol. i. p. 249; Löscher, vol. iii. p. 284; Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 153.

[2] De Wette, vol. i. p. 101.

[3] Seidemann, *L. D.* App. 11, p. 119 *et seq.*

the disputation, he said, because it would interrupt them in their sloth and their boozing; it would be quite another thing if there were a prospect of its bringing in money, or a good dinner. He thought his University had been a "universale studium," where, *salvâ fide Catholicâ*, anything might be fairly debated: if without harm to any one disputations had been held at Leipzig on the Trinity, the Eucharist, and other articles of the faith, why not on the ascent of the soul to heaven as soon as the money rings at the bottom of the box? He besought the Bishop, therefore, to withdraw his protection from these people who called themselves theologians, and yet were ashamed of bringing their knowledge to the light, "that we poor laymen may be instructed wherein we do right, and wherein we are deceived by false interpreters of Scripture." The Bishop was still obdurate; perhaps, in face of the Papal attitude, could not be otherwise. Whereupon George took the matter into his own hands: "if he is Bishop of Merseburg, he is not ruler of the land"; and formally approved of the disputation being held on the 27th of June. There was still some difficulty as to Luther's admission to a debate, which in all the negotiations, up to almost the latest point, had been assumed to be between Carlstadt and Eck. But already, in the general opinion, Carlstadt was beginning to take the second place in what promised to be a solemn, and perhaps decisive, encounter of opposing theological principles. On the 19th of February Eck had written to Luther, "Although Carlstadt is your champion, you are the real leader, you who have scattered broadcast through all Germany these doctrines, which, to my poor and slender judgment, appear false and erroneous. Wherefore it is right that you also should come to Leipzig, and either defend your own, or impugn my Theses. . . . For you see by the schedule of dispute that I have laid down propositions, not so much against Bodenstein, as against your doctrines." This, though a late, was so manifestly a true statement of the case, that Luther's claim to be allowed to intervene in the debate could hardly be denied. After some difficulties and delays it was allowed; though not formally, till the disputants had actually arrived in Leipzig, and the disputation was about to begin.[1]

[1] Böttiger, *Gesch. Sachsens*, vol. i. p. 343; Seidemann, *L. D.* App. 11-18, pp. 112, 126; Enders, vol. i. p. 429.

Duke George, sometimes called the Bearded, at this time the head of the younger or Albertine line of the Saxon princes, was the son of that Albert whom Kunz von Kaufungen stole, and of Sidonia, daughter of George Podiebrad, King of Bohemia.[1] Born in 1471, he succeeded his father in the year 1500 as Duke of that part of Saxony which we may describe as the Meissen, Dresden, Leipzig land. He was originally intended for the Church, and in that view had received a better education than commonly fell to the lot of princes; he corresponded with Erasmus and Sadolet; he took a deep personal interest in the University of Leipzig, which he was grieved to see overshadowed by the rising fame of Wittenberg. His morals were pure; his religious feeling genuine; if sometimes hard and arbitrary in his procedure, he had a high idea of the duties of a ruler, and tried to govern his land justly and mercifully. Though a sincere Catholic, and deliberately preferring the doctrinal system of the Church to that introduced by Luther, he was deeply persuaded of the necessity of reform, and was among the foremost in urging the subject upon the attention of Imperial Diets. But the reform he wanted was disciplinary not doctrinal; nor did he at all see that the way to the former lay through the latter. Perhaps the tinge of his Catholicism became deeper as he grew old and was more and more involved in opposition to the innovators of Wittenberg; but there was an earlier time at which his aims and theirs had not been so far apart. A story was current that he had compared Erasmus with the Wittenbergers, not to the advantage of the Dutch scholar: they at least could utter a decisive Yes or No. But what if their Yes were his own No? Luther, who, notwithstanding much bitter conflict between them, was not slow to acknowledge Duke George's good qualities, found this out at an early period. On the 25th of July 1518[2] he preached before the Duke at Dresden, on a text from the

[1] It is a curious proof of the intensely aristocratic spirit of the German chapter that George, although the son of a reigning Duke and of a King's daughter, was refused a canonry at Köln on account of some difficulty as to the nobility of his mother's descent. Böttiger, vol. i. p. 562.

[2] This date is usually given as July 25, 1517. The story was first told by Fabricius, *Originum Illustrissimae Stirpis Saxonicae Libri vii.* p. 859, who dates it "paulo ante quam nota fuerat haec controversia," and it was copied by Seckendorf, lib. i. sec. 8, p. 23. The sermon is fixed as having

gospel of the day, "Ye know not what ye ask," and from it took occasion to set forth his cardinal doctrine of Christ alone the justification, the sanctification, the salvation of men. The Duke's attention was powerfully excited; and turning to Barbara von der Sala, his wife's chief lady-in-waiting, he asked what she thought of the sermon. "If she could only hear such another," she said, "she hoped one day to die in peace." The answer did not please the Duke, who declared more than once that he would give a great deal not to have heard it, for it could only make the people secure and reckless. It was the old and perennial difference between opposite schools of religious thought that came out in this speech; the Augustinian accuses the Pelagian of spiritual chill and death; the Pelagian retorts upon the Augustinian the charge of moral laxity and indifference. And it cannot be too carefully borne in mind that not all who defended the ancient Church against the attacks of the Reformers were blind devotees of superstition, or dull advocates of abuse and license. The doctrine of justification by faith alone is not so powerfully buttressed by scriptural arguments as to make its denial an act of intellectual suicide: while, if the tree is to be known by its fruits, it must be admitted to be one that is peculiarly susceptible of moral perversion. Duke George, both as a man and as a ruler, was not dissimilar in character to his cousin, the Elector Frederick, and the two obeyed the same order of motives. But they looked at religion from different points of view.

During the first six months of 1519, through which the negotiations for the Leipzig disputation had been prolonged, Luther had been actively engaged in both academical and literary work. Besides scattered sermons which have been preserved, his chief productions at this time were his *German Exposition of the Lord's Prayer for Simple Laymen*, the first part of his *Operationes in Psalmos*, and the earliest form of his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*. The first of these arose out of lectures on the Lord's Prayer, which he had

been delivered on St. James's Day, by a letter addressed by Luther to Spalatin (De Wette, vol. i. p. 84), which is plainly dated Jan. 14, 1518. Enders, however (vol. i. p. 353), has adduced several passages in the letter itself which require that it should be put a year later; and he supposes that Luther, writing at the very beginning of the year 1519, wrote 1518 by mistake, and from the force of habit. Köstlin (p. 788, note to p. 204) has adopted this emendation.

delivered as far back as the winter of 1516-1517, and which, having been taken down in Latin by John Agricola of Eisleben, and published by him, had had a large circulation. But Luther was not satisfied with this unauthorised edition of his book, and in December 1518 set to work on another, which was printed and ready for circulation at the beginning of the following April. The repeated editions of this book, both in German and in Latin, testify to its wide popularity; it was soon translated into the Italian and Bohemian languages; Beatus Rhenanus, the celebrated humanist, wrote to Zwingli, expressing his wish that it could be read in every house in Switzerland; while Duke George told its author that he had introduced confusion into many consciences, and that men were complaining that if he were listened to, it would take them four days to get through one Paternoster. I have already alluded to Luther's devotion to the Psalter and to his earliest lectures on that book, recently republished from his manuscript. These, with his enlarged knowledge and advancing views, he now looked upon as superseded, and replaced them by a second course, which he himself carefully prepared for the press. The first instalment of the work, containing a commentary on Psalms i.-v., was published with a preface by Melanchthon, addressed to students of theology, and dedicated by Luther to the Elector in a letter dated March 27th. Other instalments, bringing the commentary down to the twenty-first Psalm, were issued in the succeeding years, until the Diet of Worms put a stop to labours which were never again systematically resumed. Of the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*—the Pauline letter which Luther was afterwards wont to call his Käthe von Bora—it will be time to speak when we are able to review it in its final form. It was the result of lectures which he had been delivering since October 1516, but the printing was not complete till September 1519. A second and revised edition, soon followed by a German translation, was published in August 1523, while the Commentary, as it at present exists —one of Luther's most celebrated works, and a chief authority for his theological opinions—belongs to 1535.[1]

[1] Kawerau, *Joh. Agricola*, p. 14; Mathesius, p. 199 A; Zwingli, *Opp.* vol. vii. p. 81; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 193, 223, 239, 288, 559; Weimar ed. vol. ii. pp. 74 *et seq.*, 436 *et seq.*

While he was engaged in these labours, and actively sharing in every detail of university management, the negotiations with Miltitz still dragged on, though, in view of the coming disputation, they had lost much of their importance. Ten days after his letter to Leo X, Luther wrote to the Elector, declaring that he had seriously and joyfully intended that "the game should come to an end," and in that view had passed by without notice Sylvester Prierias's Reply; but that now Eck had, suddenly and without warning, attacked him, and not him alone, but the whole University of Wittenberg; and that it was not fair his mouth should be closed while another was allowed to speak. After this it mattered very little that in May Miltitz summoned Luther to Coblenz to submit himself to the judgment of the Archbishop of Trier in the presence of Cajetan. The affair had gone too far for that. Luther replied in a letter which, under the forms of courtesy, veiled something like a defiance, and turned all his attention to the impending controversy with Eck. It was one of the busiest periods of a singularly busy life; probably it was at this time that, as he himself tells the story, he could not find leisure to recite his daily hours, and was accustomed to bring up his arrears of prescribed devotion once a week. The energy which thus poured itself forth was apparently inexhaustible; no wonder that he made upon Germany the impression of a portent, and that his enemies feared as much as his friends admired him.[1]

The months preceding the opening of the disputation at Leipzig were for Luther a period of marked mental growth and change, especially in regard to his relation to the Papacy. His collision with Cajetan, the difficulties of his position towards the Elector, the soft speeches of Miltitz, reinforced as they were by the solicitations of his friends, no doubt taught him much; but it was the function of Eck, a function unconsciously

[1] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 237, 270, 274, 275; *Coll.* vol. iii. p. 279.

There is extant a letter from Leo to Luther, dated March 29th, first published by Löscher, though in an incomplete form, in which the Pope, stating that he had received Miltitz's report, and making the most of what it contained as to Luther's repentance and recantation, orders him to come to Rome at once to make his submission, promising that he shall find there a pious and kind father. So far as it is possible to judge, this document never reached Luther. If it came through the hands of Miltitz, he may have thought it inexpedient to forward it to its destination. Enders, vol. i. p. 492.

exercised, to excite him to research into the historical foundations of the Papacy. In Luther's *Resolutiones* on the Ninety-five Theses he had, in his exposition of Thesis 22, let fall the remark, that in the time of St. Gregory the Roman was not above other Churches. Upon this unguarded expression Eck, who had a keen eye for a disputable proposition, had fastened, and had made it the occasion of the last of the thirteen Theses which he issued in reply to Carlstadt on the 29th of December 1518. It ran, "That the Roman Church was not superior to other Churches before the time of Sylvester we deny: but him who possesses both the chair and the faith of Peter we have always recognised as Peter's successor and the general vicar of Christ." There was nothing in Carlstadt's Theses which should have called out this; it was meant to be a direct challenge to Luther, and was at once recognised as such. Nor did Luther hesitate to accept it. Before the 7th of February he had prepared thirteen counter Theses, of which the last was, "That the Roman Church is superior to all others is proved by the most frigid decrees of the Roman Pontiffs, issued during the last 400 years; in opposition to which stand the approved history of 1100 years, the text of Holy Scripture, and the decree of the Nicene Council, which is the most sacred of all." No issue could be more clearly joined; but it was upon a new and perilous field, chosen, not by Luther, but by an artful adversary. The doctrine of indulgences had never been defined by authority; in regard to it it was possible to make little of differences, to slip out of a doubtful position, to hide concession in a cloud of words. But in more ways than one the primacy of the Roman See was the key of the position.[1]

Luther's friends were seriously alarmed at the new turn the controversy had taken. Carlstadt did not like it. Spalatin, who had the Elector on one side and Luther on the other, was in an agony of apprehension. It was just at this moment, too, that Düngersheim von Ochsenfahrt, a professor of theology at Leipzig, and a clumsy champion of the old learning, wrote to Luther the first of a series of long letters, proving the primacy of the Pope by the well-worn arguments and reference to the ancient authorities. Luther's answers were brief, but not

[1] Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 571; vol. ii. pp. 161, 185.

uncourteous; he referred his correspondent to the approaching disputation at Leipzig; he pointed out to him that their standards of historical truth were not the same; he declared that he rested upon the words of the Gospel, and found in the Scriptures the test by which the statements of the Fathers were to be tried. In truth, under the sting of these various impulses, and urged by an inner necessity of his own mind, he is diligently studying the subject with a view to the coming contest. It is, he thinks, as if the Lord were leading him. The more he reads, the more he comes into contact with the actual pretensions of the Papacy, the graver grows his mood. As early as the end of February we find him greatly struck with a satirical dialogue—once attributed to Erasmus and to Hutten, but now known to be the production of neither—in which in the other world Julius II is made to tell the story of Papal wars and wickedness to Peter, who keeps locked against him the gate of Paradise.[1] It is now that, notwithstanding his smooth negotiations with Miltitz, he writes to Lange that he has played with Rome hitherto, but will play no longer; it is now that he tells Spalatin, whom he alternately soothes and alarms, that if the Pope be not Antichrist, he is at least Antichrist's apostle. At last he sees whither his principles have been leading him all the time. "My Spalatin," he writes about the end of May, "the truth of Scripture and the Church cannot be handled unless this beast be attacked. Do not therefore hope that I shall be quiet and safe, unless you are willing that I should give up theology altogether. Let my friends therefore think me mad. The affair will not reach an end (if it is from God) unless, as His disciples and acquaintances deserted Christ, so also all my friends desert me, and truth be left alone—truth, which will save itself by its own right hand, not mine, nor yours, nor any man's. And this

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 230. This dialogue, entitled "F. A. F. Poetae Regii libellus de obitu Julii Pontificis Maximi anuo domini MDXIII," will be found in *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. iv. p. 421. F. A. F. stands for Faustus Andrelinus of Forli, an Italian poet who enjoyed the protection of Lewis XII of France. It ran through several editions, and was translated into German and French. Böcking gives it among the "Dialogi Pseudo-Huttenici." Erasmus was gravely annoyed that it should be ascribed to him, *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 437 A. Letter to Cardinal Campeggio. Conf. Strauss, *U. v. Hutten*, p. 74.

have I foreseen from the beginning. . . . And last of all, if I perish, the world will lose nothing. Thanks to God, the Wittenbergers have got far enough not to need me. What do you want? I, unhappy, fear lest perchance I should not be worthy to suffer and to die in such a cause; that will be the happiness of better men, not of so foul a sinner." In this mood he went to Leipzig. Henceforth no looking back was possible.[1]

It was Luther's original intention not to give the world or his opponent any hint of the line of argument which he intended to take. For some reason, however, with which we are unacquainted, he changed his mind, and early in June published a pamphlet entitled *Resolutio Lutheriana super Propositione sua xiii. de potestate Papae.* It was a gauntlet thrown down to the Papal See. He begins by the complaint, which sounds strange in our ears, but which was no doubt true to one of his own changeful moods, that he has been forced into a public appearance, and declares that he desires nothing so much as, with his Christian name unsmirched, "to retire to his own corner." He fully accepts the fact of the Papal primacy, and in it recognises the will of God. If Christ's precept was to go two miles with the man who asks us to go with him one, how much more should we yield to the Pope, whether he act justly or unjustly? For his supremacy is an incomparably less thing than that through us unity and charity and humility should be destroyed for its sake. But when he has enumerated six reasons of this kind in favour of recognition of the Papacy, he goes on to examine the grounds on which it is alleged to be of divine right, subjecting texts of Scripture, dicta of the Fathers, and decrees of the Popes to rigid scrutiny and careful interpretation. In like manner the history of the early Church is made to give evidence against Papal claims; the rule of Rome is wide, but it neither is nor ever has been universal. It is not, however, necessary to follow the steps of an argument which we shall meet with again and again, and which is familiar to every student of ecclesiastical history. A

[1] Conf. Otto Beckmann to Spalatin: Löscher, vol. iii. p. 91. Kolde, *Anal. Luther.* p. 6. The correspondence with Düngersheim will be found in Enders, vol. i. pp. 355, 365, 373, 437, 451, 478. De Wette, vol. i. pp. 217, 230, 239, 260; vol. vi. p. 13.

more important thing is the example which Luther set of critically examining the Papal claims, and the principles of spiritual judgment which he applied, though without fully seeing their scope and significance. If the Pope's primacy be taken out of the category of things which rest on a basis of divine right, how long will it be accepted as a matter of administrative expediency? Luther himself suggests the answer: "If the primacy of the Roman Pontiff should begin to tend to the injury of the Church, it ought to be utterly taken away; for human rights and customs ought to save the Church, not to contend against her." And such passages as the following, which at once go down to the roots of the controversy and expose the foundations of all spiritual religion, breathe the noblest spirit of the coming reformation. "Wherefore, wherever the word of God is preached and believed, there is the true faith, that rock immovable; where faith, there the Church; where the Church, there the Bride of Christ; where the Bride of Christ, there all things that are the Bridegroom's. So faith has with it whatever follows upon faith—keys, sacraments, power, and all the rest." And at the end: "Last of all, I say, that I do not know whether the Christian faith can bear it, that there should be any other head of the Universal Church on earth than Christ Himself."[1]

Eck arrived in Leipzig on the 21st or 22d of June, furnished with letters of recommendation from the Dukes of Bavaria and the Fuggers of Augsburg; and on the 23d, which was the festival of Corpus Christi, took part in the public procession, duly clad in sacerdotal garments. The next day his opponents from Wittenberg made a solemn entry into the city. Carlstadt rode in one carriage, Luther and Melanchthon in another; Duke Barnim of Pomerania, the youthful rector of their University, accompanied them, and a crowd of two hundred students, armed with pikes and halberts, formed their escort. John Lange, who was now prior of the Augustinian convent at Erfurt, two licentiates in theology, one of whom was Nicholas Amsdorf, and three doctors of law, completed the party. Just as the procession was passing the churchyard of St. Paul's, Carlstadt's carriage came to pieces, and let him

[1] Weimar ed. vol. ii. pp. 180, 183, 186, 208, 239.

down in the mire, a misfortune which the populace took as an augury of his approaching defeat at the hands of Eck. But auguries can always be interpreted in two ways; and as Luther's carriage passed on and took the first place in the cavalcade, men said that it was clear that he and not Carlstadt was the real champion of the new movement. The city was all alive with excitement, which the presence of the Wittenberg students did much to augment. Every lodging-house which gave them shelter, every tavern in which they took their meals, was the scene of the liveliest debate, and their hosts had much to do to keep the peace. Almost all Leipzig took Eck's side; it was not only the old learning against the new, but university against university, the ancient seat of scholarship against an upstart rival. Luther and the Wittenbergers did not complain of the formal civility which they received; but they were made to feel that the cordial welcome of the authorities was reserved for Eck.

At the last moment the Bishop of Merseburg, true to the attitude which he had assumed from the first, caused notices to be affixed to the church doors of Leipzig, in which he forbade the holding of the disputation, on pain of excommunication of all concerned. But it was a sign of the times that the magistracy of Leipzig took no further notice of the monition than to commit to the city prison the official by whom it was made. Then came the question of the conditions under which the disputation was to take place. It had been originally agreed, a good deal against Eck's will, that the proceedings should all be reduced to writing by official reporters, and from this stipulation Carlstadt refused to withdraw. The next proposition was that this report should not be published until judges, still to be appointed, had given their decision upon the result of the disputation. To this Luther demurred. What he wanted was a free appeal to public opinion. He was willing to take the risk of debate against so accomplished a disputant as Eck, if only competent hearers and readers were allowed to judge for themselves of the facts and arguments produced on either side. He could hardly doubt that whoever was the judge agreed upon, the decision would go against himself, and he did not wish that element of adverse prejudice

to be imported into the affair. He was, however, obliged to give way. The matter had gone too far for withdrawal from the lists to be possible. Any decisive objection on his part to the conditions laid down, however intrinsically reasonable, would be interpreted as cowardice; and he contented himself, therefore, with a simple reservation of his right of appeal to a council. The question as to who the judges should be was by mutual consent adjourned to the close of the disputation.[1]

On Monday, June 27th, all was ready. The proceedings began at seven A.M. with a Latin speech, addressed by Simon Pistoris, Professor of Jurisprudence, to the assembled University with all guests and strangers. Then a procession, in which a Leipzig Master walked with each Master from Wittenberg, was formed to St. Thomas's church, where a solemn mass, *De Sancto Spiritu*, was sung, written by the Cantor George Rhau, in twelve parts, a thing unknown before. The assembly next adjourned to the Pleissenburg, the Duke's castle, on the outskirts of the town, over which a guard of seventy-six armed citizens kept watch and ward during the disputation. Here a spacious hall, hung with costly tapestry, had been made ready for the encounter, with seats for the Duke and his distinguished guests, ample accommodation for the reporters and the learned audience, and two desks for the disputants, that allotted to Eck adorned by a picture of St. George, that to the Wittenbergers by one of St. Martin. But there were still more solemn preliminaries to go through. Peter Schade, usually known as Mosellanus, the only humanist of the University, and on that account more favourable to Luther than any of his colleagues, delivered a Latin speech of nearly an hour's length, "on the method of disputation, especially in matters theological," at the end of which the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* was thrice sung, with orchestral accompaniment, all the company meanwhile devoutly kneeling. Last of all, a herald proclaimed the actual opening of the disputation at two o'clock in the afternoon; and the doctors, weary and hungry, went to their mid-day meal.

Besides the official report of this famous discussion, six or seven descriptions of it by eye-witnesses still remain to keep

[1] The terms of the contract will be found in Seidemann, *L. D.* App. 28, p. 137.

the memory of the scene alive. One, written by Mosellanus to a well-known Saxon nobleman, Julius Pflug, contains vivid portraits of the three chief actors. "Martin," he says,[1] "is of middle height, of spare body, spent alike with cares and study, so that whoever looks at him can almost count his bones; still in the prime of life, with strength undiminished, and a high and clear voice. His Scriptural knowledge and learning are admirable, and he can give chapter and verse for his quotations." He has a competent knowledge of Greek and Hebrew, and a great store of matter. "In his private life and manners he is obliging and facile; nothing stoic, nothing supercilious: he plays the man of all occasions. He is festive, jocund, alert, always with a cheerful face, no matter how horrible his adversary's threats: you would with difficulty believe that a man could accomplish such arduous things without divine assistance. What people generally blame in him is that he is somewhat too bold in reprehension and more biting in speech than is either safe in one who introduces religious novelties or decorous in a theologian." "I am not certain," adds Mosellanus, "whether he does not share this defect with all late-taught men." Carlstadt is of smaller stature, with a dark and adust complexion. His voice is indistinct and unpleasant: his memory is less retentive, and he more easily gives way to anger. Eck is tall, of figure solid and square, with a voice so full as to be sufficient not only for a tragedian, but for a crier, yet rough rather than distinct. His countenance, his eyes, his whole appearance are such as to suggest the butcher or the soldier more than the theologian. He has a remarkable memory, not mated with an equal intellect. A quick apprehension, a discerning judgment, without which all other gifts are futile, the man has not. He brings forward a great mass of arguments, Scripture texts, dicta of the Fathers, which he throws down before his audience, without much caring whether they are appropriate or cogent, and trusts to this display of undigested learning to produce an effect upon the less thoughtful. With this he has an incredible audacity, which he conceals with admirable cunning. If ever by overboldness he feels that he has fallen into the enemy's snare, he

[1] Löscher, vol. iii. p. 247.

gradually turns the disputation in another direction. Sometimes he adopts his adversary's view, though expressed in other words, and with wonderful skill charges his own absurdity on his opponent; so that he might seem to be able to vanquish a very Socrates. So far, in effect, Mosellanus, who, though he has his preferences, which he does not hesitate to avow, writes with the vividness of an eye-witness and the discernment of a man of sense.

We may pass over with little remark the duel between Carlstadt and Eck. By common consent it turned upon Divine Grace and human freewill—whether any share in the production of good works could be assigned to the latter, and if so, under what conditions and to what extent? Carlstadt took the Augustinian, Eck the semi-Pelagian view; intellectually the debate was chiefly remarkable as showing how nearly it is possible for disputants upon such a subject to approach, without conceding to either the honours of victory, or feeling the fact of agreement. To minds unaccustomed to the nice distinctions of scholastic logic it seems to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of disputation to declare, as did Eck, that though every good work of man is from God, it is *totum sed non totaliter*. Perhaps the interruptions of the debate were more interesting than the debate itself. On the evening of the 28th of June Eck broke into the course of the disputation with a complaint of the way in which his adversary was conducting it. Carlstadt had made written notes of the arguments which he intended to use, and in order to secure accuracy in his quotations had brought with him the books from which they were taken, a proceeding which, in Eck's opinion, deprived him of the advantage which he might fairly expect to derive from his more retentive memory and his superior self-confidence. The Duke and his councillors, on being appealed to, decided in favour of Eck's protest, and Carlstadt was ordered to leave his books and papers at home; but the sentence at once degraded the disputation from a scientific attempt to thresh out theological truth into a contest in which the victory remained to the loudest lungs and the most unabashed audacity. The day after this little episode, the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul, the disputation was interrupted, and by the desire of Duke

Barnim of Pomerania Luther preached in the hall, the Castle chapel being too small to contain the numbers who streamed from Leipzig to hear him. Nor did he scruple to plunge into the matters in dispute; the first part of his sermon was on grace and freewill; the second on the power of the keys. Duke George was not among Luther's hearers; his minister, Cæsar Pflug, when he heard of it, wished that he had kept the sermon for Wittenberg. This, however, was the only occasion offered to Luther of addressing the common people; Eck, on the contrary, preached four times in various Leipzig churches, making his boast that he had done what he could to stir up repugnance to the Lutheran errors.[1]

The second act of the drama began on the 4th of July, when Eck and Luther entered upon their dispute as to the primacy of the Pope. The line which the latter took has already been sufficiently indicated in the account which we have given of his preliminary pamphlet, and need not now be described at length. It was the divine right of the successors of Peter which he denied; their primacy as an actual ecclesiastical fact, as a useful part of the administration of the Church, he fully admitted. He criticised the usual interpretation of Matt. xvi. 18 and John xxi. 15; he asked where was the primacy of the Church in the twenty years before Peter went to Rome; he adduced precedents to show that great prelates in the first century did not acknowledge the Bishop of Rome as their superior; he brought forward the decrees of the Nicene Council; he appealed to the theory and example of the Greek Church. In this argument he had greatly the advantage of Eck, whose knowledge of Christian antiquity was of the most imperfect and uncritical kind, and who quoted, as of equal authority, genuine and spurious works of the Fathers, false decretals, and well-authenticated canons. Overmatched in fair fight Eck had then recourse to the appeal *ad invidiam*, and made up for lack of facts and arguments by bold insinuations of heresy. One name he had to conjure with, that of Hus; one recollection that was sure to excite the prejudices of his audience, that of Bohemian misbelief and the bloody wars of

[1] Melanchthon, *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. p. 92; Löscher, vol. iii. pp. 310, 516; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 285, 288, 293.

which it had been the occasion. Early in the debate we find him introducing the word "Bohemian"; he even, with hypocritical courtesy, apologises for connecting it with Luther's case; but what can he do? Luther at first is satisfied with energetically repudiating the association; but as Eck presses him, his allegiance to truth gets the better of his controversial caution, and he declares that among the doctrines ascribed to Hus were many that were plainly most Christian and evangelical, and such as the universal Church could not condemn. Then, pressed still further with the condemnation of Hus by the Council of Constanz, he was compelled to allow that even Councils may err, and have erred. Eck had all he wanted; to have elicited such a confession from his opponent more than made up for any argumentative defeat on matters of detail. But it was not till some months afterwards that Luther recognised the full scope of what he had said. He read Hus's books; he received letters of congratulation and encouragement from Bohemia; and in February 1520 he was ready to write to Spalatin, "Up to this time I have unknowingly held and taught all John Hus's doctrines; in a like unknowingness has John Staupitz taught them; briefly, we are all unconscious Hussites. In fine, Paul and Augustine are Hussites to the letter."[1]

The debate on the primacy of the Pope lasted till the 8th of July. The next subject was purgatory. Upon this Luther held a less tenable position than his adversary; for while he firmly believed the reality of purgatory, he denied that there was any warrant for it in Scripture, or in the writings of the early Fathers. On July 11th issue was joined on indulgences; but Eck did not defend the abuses of the doctrine, which alone, up to this time, Luther had attacked, and the debate languished. "If indulgences had never been preached in any other way,"[2] was the Reformer's caustic remark to Spalatin, "no one would ever have heard the name of Luther." Whether repentance included the love of God, or might rightly be said to spring from the fear of punishment; and what was the scope of priestly absolution, were questions which occupied the

[1] Löscher, vol. iii. pp. 360, 372, 389, 649; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 315, 341, 425.
[2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 297.

12th and 13th of July; after which Carlstadt returned to the field for a day or two. On the 16th the disputation was brought to an end by an "Encomium Theologicae Disputationis" by John Lange,[1] after which George Rhau and the city pipers again made their appearance, the one intoning the "Te Deum Laudamus," the others "blowing their best and noblest." The fact was that Duke George had received notice of the speedy arrival in Leipzig of the Elector Joachim of Brandenburg, and needed the free use of the Pleissenburg for his entertainment. The only question left for decision was who the judges should be to whom the official reports were to be submitted. All the parties to the disputation agreed in the selection of the Universities of Paris and of Erfurt,[2] Eck stipulating that in the case of the latter the Augustinians, as possibly prejudiced in Luther's favour, should have no voice. Two propositions, made by Luther, first, that Dominicans and Franciscans also should be excluded, and next, that all Masters in the universities named, and not merely the graduates of the theological faculty, should be invited to take part in the decision, were referred to Duke George, and by him rejected. But they are noteworthy as showing the kind of public opinion to which he wished to appeal.[3]

It was a drawn battle, as almost all such battles must be. Luther, not long afterwards, pronounced it "a loss of time, not an inquiry into truth."[4] Probably the arguments on each side did little more than strengthen those who heard them in their antecedent prejudices. The Leipzig doctors, who dozed away the long mornings amid the hum of learned eloquence, and needed to be awakened when the clock struck the hour of dinner, were not likely to be very accessible to the rhetoric of the Wittenbergers, who, on the other hand, addressed themselves with better hope of result to their young rector, Duke Barnim, and the audience of students which they had brought with them. Duke George, who attended with great regularity, was only confirmed in dislike of Luther and his doctrines.

[1] Not Luther's friend of that name, but a Silesian scholar.

[2] Eck and Carlstadt agreed upon Erfurt only.

[3] Löscher, vol. iii. pp. 280, 412, 413, 607. De Wette, vol. i. p. 320; vol. vi. p. 18. Seidemann, *L. D.* App. 28, p. 137.

[4] De Wette, vol. i. p. 291.

An eye-witness, Sebastian Fröschel, tells us that when Luther declared that some of John Hus's doctrines were Christian and evangelical, Duke George put his arms akimbo, and said in a voice loud enough to be heard all over the hall, "Pest take *that!*" He was not prepared for innovation. We seem to hear the voice of the practical statesman in opposition to that of the speculative theologian when he said to Luther, "After all, human right or divine right, the Pope is and remains the Pope." The general feeling in Leipzig was almost unanimous in favour of Eck; he was courted, feasted, invited to preach, presented with robes of honour, treated, in a word, as the champion of the faith. The Duke once invited Luther, Melanchthon, and Carlstadt to dinner; and one or two other persons extended to them a like hospitality. The city sent them an honorary present of wine, an attention which the manners of the time rendered imperatively necessary. Fröschel tells the story that when Luther entered by chance the Dominican Church, the monks, in hot haste, took the Host from the altar and locked it up out of sight and reach of the dangerous heretic. Under these circumstances it was not wonderful that he should wish to get away as soon as possible from the unfriendly city. He left Leipzig for Wittenberg on the 15th of July, a day before the conclusion of Carlstadt's second debate with Eck. Eck remained, sunning himself in the popularity which he had acquired, a week or ten days longer, and then travelled in the train of Duke George to Annaberg.[1]

To Luther at least the Leipzig disputation was something much more than the dialectical tournament which Eck had desired to provoke, and in which he so greatly delighted. The necessity of precisely formulating his opinions on several questions which the Papal champions regarded as vital, and again of defending them against the attack of a keen and pertinacious disputant, helped to show him what his position really was. It was not that he interpreted the mind of Christian antiquity more critically than his opponent, but that he had read it in a sense altogether irreconcilable with the Roman claims. It was not merely that he denied the divine

[1] Löscher, vol. iii. p. 280; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 290-302.

authority of the successor of St. Peter, but that he set up against it another authority, to which it could not but bow. All through the disputation Luther makes his appeal to Scripture, as the test by which Fathers, Popes, Schoolmen, even Councils must ultimately be tried. He has not drawn out his theory in logical form; he has not settled for himself the relation between the authority of the Bible and that which the Church lawfully and undoubtedly possesses; he is as far as possible from seeing that the authority of the Bible is with him only an assumption, beneath which lie sleeping many questions which will one day demand settlement. He does not know that unconsciously, and under cover of the Bible, he is in large part resting upon his own masculine judgment, his own keen spiritual insight. What is, however, increasingly clear to him is, that he has broken with Rome. He cannot remain in the fold of the Church and at the same time make light of indulgences, deny the divine right of Papal authority, and maintain the fallibility of Councils. Eck's instinct as a disputant was unerring; he had gained his end when he exhibited Luther as taking sides with Hus against the Fathers of Constanz. Their ways now parted decisively; Eck went to Rome to ask for the Bull of Excommunication, Luther to Wittenberg to inveigh against the Babylonian Captivity of the Church, and to appeal to the nobles of the German nation.[1]

Under what seemed to be the extinguished ashes of the Leipzig disputation soon began to glow embers of petty and unprofitable controversy. Eck, who from this time forward assumed the character of an official champion of Roman

[1] Löscher (vol. iii. p. 214 *et seq.*) gives seven reports of the Leipzig Disputation. (1) That addressed by Melanchthon to Oekolampadius; (2) by Eck to Hoogstraten; (3) by Cellarius to Capito; (4) by Luther to Spalatin; (5) by Amsdorf to Spalatin; (6) by Mosellanus to Julius Pflug; (7) of which one Rubens is the author. He also gives the naïve narrative of Sebastian Fröschel, published forty-seven years later in the preface of his book *On the Kingdom of Christ*. To these may be added Luther's dedication of his *Resolutiones* to Spalatin (De Wette, vol. i. p. 290), and Luther and Carlstadt's joint letter to the Elector (De Wette, vol. i. p. 307). Seidemann's *Leipziger Disputation* is a model of careful research, and its Appendices give important documents in their original form. A paper by R. Albert in the *Zeitschrift für die Historische Theologie* for 1873, p. 382 *et seq.*, "Aus welchem Grunde disputierte John Eck gegen M. Luther in Leipzig 1519?" makes careful reference to all the original authorities, but does not seem to add anything to Seidemann.

orthodoxy and authority against Lutheran revolt, wrote to the Elector Frederick, explaining and excusing the part which he had taken. The Elector replied by placing the letter in the hands of Luther and Carlstadt, who were not slow in self-vindication. There was a dispute as to the manner in which the debate had been conducted, especially as to whether the chief combatants had not received unfair help from their adherents. Melanchthon, immediately on his return to Wittenberg, wrote an account of the whole affair to Oekolampadius, which soon found its way into print. This Eck resented as a breach of the compact as to the publication of the official notes, although he had himself sent a similar report to Hoogstraten, with the view of influencing the judgment of the University of Paris; and an exchange of hostile pamphlets took place between him and Melanchthon. A controversy in which, in the early part of the year, Luther had become involved with the Franciscans of Jüterbogk was revived and embittered by the interference of Eck on the one hand, of the Bishop of Brandenburg on the other; and now Luther published a *Defence* in which he parried the double assault. He had a little brush of his own with Hoogstraten, Reuchlin's old enemy; he published *Resolutiones*, or detailed explanations of the propositions which he had defended at Leipzig, and before the end of the year another polemical pamphlet against Eck. In the meantime a new opponent, who was destined to harass him for many years, made his appearance. Hieronymus Emser, a humanist of the older school, and a correspondent of Erasmus, had been for some time Duke George's secretary. So far as we can now see, his relations to Luther had been outwardly friendly, though each must have recognised the fact that the other belonged to a different school of thought and scholarship. Emser had naturally been active at Leipzig in making arrangements for the disputation, and probably had been present at all its most interesting moments. In August he wrote a letter, it is difficult to see why, except to make mischief, to Dr. John Zack, a dignitary of the Catholic Church in Prag, in which, under the transparent pretext of defending Luther from the charge of sympathy with Bohemian heresy, he artfully strove to connect him with it. For some reason or other this

covert attack was peculiarly irritating to Luther, who replied in a very bitter pamphlet, the violence of which it is impossible to defend. Emser, who claimed to be a man of family, was accustomed to have his crest, the head of a mountain goat, accompanied by some appropriate motto, printed on the title-page of his books. Luther's first pamphlet is addressed to the "Emserian Goat"; before long Emser retorted upon the "Mad Bull of Wittenberg," and a controversy began which, in the interests of Christian truth, it is not worth while to follow, in the interests of Christian charity best to pass by.[1]

Not even the Leipzig disputation seems to have discouraged that sanguine diplomatist Miltitz. It is difficult to believe that he can have really cherished any hope of succeeding in his mission, though, so long as a chance remained, he may have been unwilling to go back to Rome with a confession of failure. He kept a cheerful countenance, he wrote letters, he arranged interviews, boasting that "he had Dr. Martin in his hands." The Golden Rose, which he had hoped to carry into Wittenberg with solemn pomp and himself place in the hands of the Elector, he had been obliged to give up at Altenburg to a commission, of which Fabian von Feilitsch was the head; worse still, he had been dissatisfied with the honorarium of 200 gulden offered him by Frederick, and had asked to have it doubled. Then, on the 9th of October, he met Luther at Liebenwerda, and there endeavoured to induce him to accompany him to Trier, where the Archbishop was willing to try his case. But the Reformer again refused to put himself in the power of his enemies, and Miltitz had no other resource than to begin renewing the web of his futile intrigue. Meanwhile it became increasingly clear that the great debate at Leipzig could come to no decisive issue. Before the end of the year the University of Erfurt declined the function of judgment. Paris was still silent; and when, on the 15th of April 1521, she spoke at last, contented herself with a condemnation of certain propositions extracted from Luther's work on *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*. The Bishop of Merseburg had been wiser

[1] Löscher, vol. iii. pp. 604, 660; De Wette, vol. i. p. 307; Weimar ed. vol. ii. pp. 388, 621, 655, 698.

in his generation than Duke George; the effect of the debate had not been to settle controversy, but to embitter it.[1]

Despite outward distractions Luther was busy through these months with academical and pastoral work at Wittenberg. The University flourished; 458 students were matriculated in 1519; in 1520, 579.[2] But we have minuter record of his activity in the pulpit at this period. Several sermons which he now preached have found a permanent place in his works, notably, one on "Usury," in which, possibly with an eye to Eck's rhetorical campaign at Bologna, he defended the common opinion of the Church as to the unlawfulness of lending money at interest.[3] The most important, however, of this year's sermons are those which in November he published with a dedication to Duchess Margaret of Brunswick-Lüneburg.[4] Their subjects were the three sacraments of Penance, Baptism, and the Eucharist. His treatment of them is eminently characteristic both of his general way of working and of the state of his mind at the moment. He approaches them from the spiritual and practical side. He does not seem at all intent upon defining how far he agrees with or differs from the orthodox doctrine. The questions which afterwards had so strong an attraction for him at present do not seem to exist. He takes transubstantiation as a matter of course, and is silent as to the sacrifice of the mass; but he almost carelessly lets drop the dangerous remark that it were well that the wine as well as the bread should be given to the laity. In the sermon on Penance we hear little of the absolving power of the priest, much of the necessity of faith in the penitent. It is impossible not to believe that even yet Luther was not eager to enter upon a process of self-examination which might end in showing him that he was an alien from the Church. Indeed, he still writes letters upon Augustinian affairs which show that he has a living interest in them, and has not forfeited the confidence of all his brethren.[5] At the same time the new leaven continues to work. The Elector, still moved by traditional piety,

[1] Tentzel, *Hist. Bericht*, vol. i. p. 415; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 328, 339, 343, 344, 349, 380; Seidemann, *L. D.* App. 34, p. 151; *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. 366.

[2] *Album Acad. Viteb.* p. 80 *et seq.*

[3] Erl. D.S. vol. xvi. p. 77; Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 33.

[4] Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 709 *et seq.*

[5] De Wette, vol. i. p. 341.

wished to institute a new celebration of the Passion in the Castle Church. It was innocent enough in itself; two priests and eight choristers were to be endowed to sing psalms with this intention three days in the week. But Luther objected that church ceremonies were already too numerous; that they had an irresistible tendency to become empty, formal, superstitious, and to substitute themselves for spiritual life and growth. And in December he tells Spalatin[1] that he must not expect anything from him in relation to the other sacraments, alluding, no doubt, to the sermons of which we have spoken. He cannot write of them until he has investigated the grounds on which they rest. "What has been fabled of the seven sacraments you shall hear at another time." And again, in the same letter, "I do not know what are the duties of a priest, as to which you inquire of me, since the more I reflect upon them the less I know what to say, unless indeed it be ceremonial things. Next, that word of the apostle Peter has great weight with me (1 Pet. ii.), 'that we are all priests,' and John the same in the Apocalypse; so that this kind of priesthood in which we are does not at all differ from the condition of the laity, except in the ministry by which we minister the word and sacraments. . . . Even so, your office in no way differs from that which is common to laymen, except in the burthens which the Roman Curia has laid upon all priests, without exception." He had been talking over these things, he said, with Melanchthon, and possibly felt the influence of his colleague's more defining and systematising intellect.

It would be difficult to say which of the two friends at this time was exercising the deeper influence on the other. The large and vivid personality of the older man had completely carried away the younger. For the time at least, Melanchthon was quite cured of his indifference to theological studies. He threw himself eagerly into the Leipzig disputation, and the controversies which followed it. In September 1519 he took the degree of Bachelor of Theology. Throughout the summer he lectured on the Epistle to the Romans, and then turned his attention to the Gospel of Matthew. In December he wrote to a friend that he was altogether absorbed

[1] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 378, 379.

in theological studies, which, he says, give him "wonderful pleasure," and delight him "as with a certain heavenly ambrosia." A few months afterwards he says to the same correspondent that "Martin is to him much greater, much more admirable than can be shadowed forth in words." Luther's enthusiasm for his young colleague is not less remarkable. "That little Greek," he fondly said, "beats me even in theology." "Master of Arts, of Philosophy, of Theology as I am," he wrote to Spalatin, "I am not ashamed to give up my own opinion if it differs from that of this grammarian. And this I have often done, and daily do, on account of the divine gift which God has, with a large benediction, poured into this earthen vessel. I do not praise Philip; he is God's creature: nor do I venerate aught save the work of my God in him." Nor is it difficult to see that at this moment Melanchthon was in advance of Luther in the precise definition of the points in which they were at issue with the Church. Two sets of theses from his pen are still extant, which, though it is impossible to date them exactly, must both belong to this period. In them he denies that the mass is a sacrifice, that to reject transubstantiation is heresy. No Catholic, he says, need believe in any articles of faith save such as are proved by Scripture: and the authority of Scripture is above that of Councils. It was from Luther's mind, and especially from his spiritual necessities, that the impetus of the new movement came; but Melanchthon possibly saw more clearly of the two in what direction they were going, and how far they had gone. Already the relation between them answers to the fact that the theology which is known as Luther's receives its most systematic exposition in Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*.[1]

We get a glimpse of a different side of Luther's character than that displayed in the controversies of the time in a work which, though not published till 1520, was completed in the last months of 1519. The Elector had been seriously ill, and Luther, prompted by Spalatin, had committed to writing some thoughts which he hoped would be consolatory to him.[2] The

[1] *Lib. Dec.* p. 23; *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. pp. 126, 128, 138, 264. De Wette, pp. 305, 380. Krafft, *Briefe und Documente aus der Zeit der Reformation*, p. 1, has recovered and published what he conceives to be Melanchthon's Theses on taking the degree of Bachelor of Theology, Sept. 9th, 1519.

[2] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. iv. p. 134. De Wette, vol. i. p. 336; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 104.

book, the original text of which was in Latin, was sent to the chaplain to be translated into German for the Prince's use. It was called *Tessaradecas, a Book of Consolation for the Weary and Heavy Laden.* A popular superstition in Germany put especial faith, in time of trouble, in fourteen saints—on what principle chosen it is impossible to say—called the Helpers (Nothhelfer).[1] For these Luther substituted as many aids of Christian meditation, dividing his work into two parts, the first treating of the seven evils which we escape, the second of the seven blessings which we enjoy. It is a quaint little treatise of practical theology, with a faint flavour of mysticism about it; grave, even austere in its tone, not sinking into any abysses of despondency, not rising into any heights of rapture. What makes it peculiarly interesting is that Luther asks Spalatin to send him back the manuscript, that he may use it for his own comfort. He was not always, then, the eager disputant, the self-confident controversialist, prompt in speech, bitter in reproach, eager in recrimination, which we might infer from his polemical writings: not even the deep spiritual teaching, the calm practical wisdom of his sermons, display all sides of his changeful character. He had his dark hours of uncertainty and despondency, in which he recoiled in something like doubt and fear from the strong things he was saying, the brave things he was doing: when he probably felt the beauty of church unity, and looked back upon the peace of earlier days, and longed for the love of friends whom he was driving away. In some such mood he wrote to Staupitz on the 3d of October:[2] "What do you desire of me? You desert me too much. To-day I have been very sorrowful on your account, as a weaned child on account of its mother. I beseech you, praise God in me, even though a sinner. I hate life, which is as bad as can be; I dread death; and though full of other gifts, which Christ knows I do not desire, if I may not serve Him, I am empty of faith." And at the conclusion of the same letter, as if to show that the personal affection overbore all other interests, "Last night I dreamed of you, as if about to depart from me: I all the

[1] The fourteen were: Blaise, George, Erasmus, Vitus, Margaret of Antioch, Christopher, Pantaleon, Cyriacus, Aegidius, Dionysius, Eustachius, Catharine, Achatius, Barbara.

[2] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 342, 343.

while most bitterly grieving and lamenting. But you, with a motion of your hand, bade me be quiet, saying that you would return to me. This certainly has become true this very day. But now, farewell, and pray for me, most miserable." It is one more proof, were any needed, that all great victories for mankind are won, as it were, by an agony and bloody sweat, and that the strongest souls have the hardest battle to fight.

The year 1519 was, quite independently of the events which we have narrated, one of capital importance in the history of the Reformation, for it witnessed the election of Charles V to the Empire. But to understand the sequence of events which ended in this result of world-wide import, we must retrace our steps a little.

As Maximilian's life drew visibly near its close, the possibility of becoming his successor agitated the minds of many princes. He was not old, if we reckon by years, having been born in 1459; but at that time few men in high station attained old age; and the approach of their sixtieth year usually found them feeble and broken. In the pursuit of his own tortuous and changeful policy, he had not disdained to dangle the glittering bait before more than one of his contemporaries; at one moment he assured Henry VIII of England of his sincere wish that he should be elected to the Empire, at another he made similar promises to the young Lewis of Bohemia. Apart from the promises or hints of the Emperor, the Elector Joachim of Brandenburg once flattered himself that the prize might be his; while it was actually, for a few hours, within reach of Frederick of Saxony. But whatever Maximilian might say or do for a temporary purpose, his heart was really set on the election of his grandson Charles, who, by the successive deaths of Isabella of Castile in 1504, of his father Philip in 1506, and of Ferdinand of Arragon in 1516, had inherited Spain, Naples, and the Netherlands. And Charles's only real competitor for the Empire was Francis I. of France.

In 1519 Francis was twenty-five years old, in the first flush of manhood, adorned with shining qualities, which drew all men's eyes upon him, and moved them to overlook defects of character, which became at once more marked and less pardonable as he grew older. How cruel, how treacherous,

how selfish he could be, they did not yet know; but they marked the beauty of his person, his mastery of all chivalrous accomplishments, his interest in art and literature, his burning desire to make a name for himself. Under his immediate predecessors France had become one and powerful; Lewis XI had taken advantage of the death of Charles the Bold to seize Burgundy and Franche Comté and Artois; while the marriage of Anne of Brittany, first with Charles VIII and then with Lewis XII, had united to the crown the last independent fief. And the first years of Francis I. had been an uninterrupted series of brilliant successes. In a campaign, which took the world by surprise, he had led his army across the Alps by passes before unknown; had defeated the Swiss, up to that time unbeaten, at the two days' battle of Marignano, had reconquered the Duchy of Milan, and made French influence once more paramount in Northern Italy. His territories were not so wide as those which owed allegiance to his rival, but they were far more compact, were not weakened by internal rivalries and dissensions, and placed their resources unreservedly at his disposal. His command of ready money was undoubted; 3,000,000 of livres, he thought, would not be too much to spend in buying his way to the Empire. But the Empire, if he attained it, was only to be his stepping-stone to greater things still. All Europe then lived in terror of the Turk; and the dream of Popes and Emperors was of a crusade against the unbeliever, which should at least repel him from the shores of Spain and Italy, or perhaps, by the hands of some heaven-born leader, once more restore the sacred sites to Christian worship. The adventure was one after Francis's own heart. When, in the spring of 1519, Sir Thomas Boleyn, Henry VIII's ambassador at his court, asked him whether, if he were elected Emperor, he would really lead an expedition against the Turks, he took the envoy's hand, and swore on his honour that within three years after his election he would be in Constantinople, or lose his life in the attempt. At that moment, at once of success and of expectation, nothing seemed too difficult to attempt, no achievement too high for his ambition.

His rival was a sickly backward boy of nineteen, burthened, to all appearance, by a fate too great for him. Born at Ghent

in 1500, Charles had been brought up in Flanders by his father's sister, Margaret. There seemed to be nothing of the Spaniard in him; Flemish was his only language; when he made his first journey to Spain in 1517, the grandees of Castile and Arragon were shocked to find that their king could neither speak to them nor understand them. For his intellectual training first Lewis Vacca, a Spaniard, and afterwards the Fleming, Adrian of Utrecht, were responsible; whatever else they taught him, they made him a sound Catholic, himself an unquestioning believer in the faith, and indisposed to allow others to question it. Declared to be of age in January 1515, Charles devoted himself steadily to the business of the State, presiding at the meetings of his Council, and reading all despatches. But those who watched him narrowly thought that he was wholly in the hands of his ministers, of whom the Seigneur de Chièvres, a member of the ancient and powerful house of Croy, was omnipotent. It was impossible to say what germs of great qualities the boy's shy gravity might hide; but at first he showed little sign of independent will and judgment. He was not inapt at manly exercises, shot well with the bow and took pleasure in field sports, "a sign," as his grandfather remarked when the fact was reported to him, "that he was no bastard." But his health was feeble, he was subject to sudden attacks on occasions of excitement; men whispered that he had the falling sickness, and would not live long to enjoy his great dignities. Possibly Chièvres did the best thing for him in keeping him under close and long tutelage; he was a plant that could not be forced; his undoubted abilities came slowly and late to maturity. But he was not without the consciousness of power, if the story be true that at a tournament, held not long after his arrival in Spain, he appeared in a suit of white armour, and on his shield the motto "Nondum"—"Not yet." And when at the beginning of the year 1519 there was a disposition on the part of his aunt Margaret and her German advisers to substitute his more popular brother Ferdinand for himself, as the Austrian candidate for the Empire, his strong will unmistakably flashed out, and he made it clear that the great prizes of ambition open to a member of his house were for its head alone.

His power was greatly crippled by the conditions under which he exercised it. Each separate constituent of his vast dominions had its own interests upon which its international policy depended. In regard to the territory which had once been Burgundian, Charles was a vassal of France; and in any case the contiguity of France and Flanders made French friendship a thing to be conciliated and preserved. On the other hand, Spain had a perpetual subject of quarrel with France in the little border kingdom of Navarre; and the French alliance, which Chièvres imposed upon Charles in the early years of his reign, was profoundly unpopular in his Peninsular kingdoms. His first appearance in Spain was anything but a triumph. I do not merely allude to the fact that his Flemish councillors excited the jealousy and trampled upon the susceptibilities of the Spanish Grandees; that Cardinal Ximenes was treated by Charles himself with cold and shameful ingratitude; that the rich archbishopric of Toledo was given to a nephew of Chièvres, hardly out of his teens; and that the Flemings generally behaved themselves in Spain as if they were at free quarters in a conquered country. If all this had been otherwise, his position would still have been difficult. The unity of the Spanish kingdoms had been only half accomplished. Castile and Arragon had fallen apart at the death of Isabella. Each of the Peninsular kingdoms had its own Cortes, its own rights, its own local prejudices. In Castile the loyalty of the people still clung to the poor mad Queen; in Arragon Ferdinand would willingly have had his favourite grandson and namesake for a successor. Charles was not accepted in his various Spanish kingdoms till he had sworn to respect their several privileges; and even then no great pecuniary resources were placed at his disposal. He had always been poor; he was obliged to borrow money from England before he could make the voyage to Spain at all; and now he found that the land of his hopes by no means glittered with gold and silver. The fact is, that at this time Spain, compared with France, England, the Netherlands, was a poor country: the expulsion of the Moors had deprived it of an industrious and prosperous population: Spaniards were more given to warlike than to agricultural or manufacturing pursuits,

and the mineral wealth of the New World was only just beginning to pour in. It was the German patriotism of the Fuggers, the great bankers of Augsburg, which supplied Charles with funds to bribe the Electors—perhaps the earliest instance on record of the decisive interference in politics of the kings of finance.

The campaign of the two rivals began as far back as 1516. Francis was first in the field. Of the seven Electors, Mainz, Trier, Köln, the Count Palatine, Brandenburg, Bohemia, Saxony, he gained, or seemed to gain four by large promises, pecuniary and otherwise. Without going into the details of the odious traffic—details which change almost from month to month, till the student is equally weary of their complexity and their baseness—it may be said that the two Hohenzollern brothers, Joachim of Brandenburg and Albert of Mainz, were at all times ready to sell their votes to the highest bidder, and anxious only to know where he was to be found. The Elector Palatine, Lewis, was almost as venal, though perhaps less cynical in his venality; and the same may be said of Hermann von Wied, the Archbishop of Köln. The King of Bohemia was a minor, not only under the joint guardianship of Maximilian and Sigismund, King of Poland, but closely connected by marriage with the House of Hapsburg, and on that account his vote was supposed to be secured to the Austrian candidate. Richard von Greiffenklau, Archbishop of Trier, steadily gave his support to Francis. There remained Frederick of Saxony, "among the faithless faithful only found." He had no reason to love the House of Hapsburg, for Maximilian's Imperial policy had been constantly directed to aggrandising the Brandenburg and depressing the Saxon princes. But through the whole of the tortuous negotiations he maintained one attitude. He would accept no bribe. He would make no promise. It was his duty as an Elector, as defined by the Golden Bull, to reserve his vote till the day of actual choice, and he meant to do it. He is the only respectable figure in a crowd of princely and mitred sharpers.

By what means Maximilian was able, when the Diet met at Augsburg in the autumn of 1518, to change all this, may be left to the minute historian of the times to tell. It is enough to say that except the incorruptible Frederick and the

Archbishop of Trier, who still clung to France, he had won over all the Electors to the side of Charles. But there were difficulties in the way of the election of the latter as King of the Romans. The chief was that Maximilian, who had never been crowned by the Pope, was himself only King of the Romans, and that one Emperor-elect could hardly be put by the side of another. What was to be done? That Maximilian should make an expedition into Italy to be crowned was not to be thought of, especially while Francis held Milan. Would the Pope send the crown to Germany? Would he send it to Trent, and with it a couple of cardinals to perform the ceremony in his stead? These were the questions which the restless old monarch was agitating when death suddenly overtook him at Wels, in the Tyrol, on the 12th of January 1519. At once the politics of the Empire assumed a new aspect. The five Electors who had pledged their votes to Charles, in a document under their own hands, treated it as so much waste paper. Under the new condition of things no promises held good, and the work of coaxing, flattering, bribing, had to be recommenced. Francis at once took heart, and sent a roving embassy to Germany: Margaret stepped into her father's place, and directed the operations of Charles's candidature from Flanders.

The two Hohenzollern Electors again showed themselves pre-eminent in greed. It is difficult to decide whether the palm of corruption belongs to the Archbishop or to the Margrave. Even the agents of Charles and Francis, who on such a subject can hardly be supposed to have been squeamish, were astonished and disgusted. The Margrave they called "the father of all avarice." At one time Francis flattered himself that he had certainly secured four votes out of the seven, namely, Mainz, Brandenburg, the Palatinate, and Trier, and was not without well-founded hope that Köln would go with them. And he had the advantage, if advantage it were, of the Pope's support. Nothing can be more instructive as to the purely worldly character of the Papal policy than Leo's conduct on this occasion. From every ecclesiastical point of view Charles was the preferable candidate. All the circumstances of his education, whatever was known of his personal inclinations, indicated the soundness of his orthodoxy. If

regard was to be paid to the possibility of a great campaign against the Turks, Charles represented on one side the Spanish crusade against the Moors, on the other the Austrian resistance to Ottoman invasion. But these were not the things of which Leo was thinking, but of the position in Italy of the States of the Church, and perhaps still more the interests of the Medicean House. He could not endure the idea that the King of Naples should also be Emperor, and the Papal territory, therefore, shut in between the dominions of a more powerful prince to north and south. At an early period of the negotiations, therefore, he declared that it was inconsistent with the conditions on which Naples was held as a Papal fief that its monarch should also rule over the Empire, and went so far as to notify to the Electors that this was an insurmountable hindrance to Charles's election. On the other hand, the connection between Francis and the House of Medici had, since the battle of Marignano had made the former a great Italian power, been close. Lorenzo de Medici, Duke of Urbino, the last legitimate male of the family not in holy orders, had by his marriage with Madeline de la Tour d'Auvergne become allied with the French royal house, and there was nothing that the Pope would not do to advance the interests of his worthless relative. Some writers, willing to suspect in Leo's policy a deeper depth of duplicity, have supposed that his support of Francis only veiled a real preference of Charles, or some possible third candidate. But the evidence, so far at least as it is accessible, goes the other way. It is hardly likely that if this had been the case he should have given Francis, by a brief under his own hand, the power of promising cardinals' hats to the Archbishops of Trier and Köln, and of offering to him of Mainz the still more glittering bribe of permission to hold a fourth bishopric, and the office of perpetual Papal Legate in Germany. Indeed it was only when Lorenzo de Medici died, in May 1519, and the Pope clearly saw that in the then temper of the German people Charles's election was inevitable, that he withdrew his opposition on the score of Naples, and acquiesced in what he could not prevent.

It would be unfair, not indeed to the probity, but to the good

sense of the Electors, to suppose that in their final decision they were guided by pecuniary and personal considerations alone. Francis might offer the best terms, but at the same time terms which it would be neither advantageous nor safe to accept. A concurrence of events in the spring of 1519 put a preponderance of physical force in the hands of the House of Hapsburg, which was the more considerable because it had behind it an overwhelming strength of national and patriotic feeling. Franz von Sickingen, the adventurous knight, whose power in the Rhineland exceeded that of many princes, after some coquetting with France, threw the weight of his lanzknechts into the opposite scale. But the most important event of this kind was a revolution which in the spring of 1519 took place in Würtemberg. Duke Ulrich, the arbitrary and passionate prince who had murdered Hans von Hutten, was an avowed partisan of France, and formidable, inasmuch as he had at his disposal a large force of disciplined Swiss soldiers. The Confederated Cantons, it is true, had severed themselves from the Empire, but they were conterminous with it, and the fact that they were ready to sell their swords to the highest bidder gave them a certain political importance. They had not forgotten Marignano, and envoys sent by Charles found a friendly welcome; although they would not openly declare for the King of Spain, they renewed their old alliance with Austria, and recalled their troops from Würtemberg. This was the signal for Ulrich's downfall. He had filled up the measure of his offences by an attack upon the free city of Reutlingen, which he had besieged, taken, and added to his own dominions. Then the Swabian League, a powerful confederacy in South-East Germany, moved. The Duke of Bavaria, whose sister, Sabina, was Ulrich's much-injured wife, raised an army, and after a brief and bloodless campaign took possession of Würtemberg, driving its ruler into deserved exile. But the troops were not disbanded when the immediate results of the war were attained, and lay not too far from Frankfurt to be, if not a menace to the Electors, at least a mute witness to the influence of the Austrian House within the Empire.

It was indeed made abundantly plain, as the day of elec-

tion drew near, that the sympathies of the people were all in favour of a prince of German blood, and that if the Electors decided for Francis, it would be at their own personal peril. A strong wave of Teutonic patriotism was rising throughout the land, which humanism and the study of history helped to swell. That Leo was on the side of France made in the same direction: all Germany, and not merely the part which was under Luther's influence, was weary of Papal extortion and oppression. Maximilian, too, had been a popular monarch—affable, easy of access, touching the common imagination by attributes of chivalry; his contemporaries did not know him as posterity does, stooping to all ignoble shifts to get money, and thwarting his own policy by an incurable levity and treachery. And when the Electors came to compare the two candidates, the very terms in which Francis set forth his claims were such as to awaken caution. He was rich, powerful, successful in war, absolute ruler of his own subjects, disposing of the resources of the first monarchy of Europe; why should the Electors put such a master over their own heads? The silent, backward boy, who was content to leave his affairs in the hands of his aunt and his ministers, who had as yet developed no military talents, and whose ability to rule was still doubtful, offered, notwithstanding the vastness of his dominions, the promise of an Emperor who would be plastic in their hands. In despite, therefore, of the arguments and promises of France, the Austrian began finally to prevail. An attempt which, almost at the last moment, Henry VIII made to put himself forward was naturally futile. When the Electors were actually assembled at Frankfurt for the choice, a final effort was made to set aside both candidates, and to put some German prince in their place. For a few hours the highest crown in the world was at the disposal of Frederick of Saxony. But he firmly pushed it away. He was too old, his health was too broken, possibly, at the bottom, the temper of his mind was too irresolute, to assume so vast a burthen of responsibility. He thought, perhaps rightly, that a prince who should restore the ancient glories of the Empire, reorganising it within, and making it respected abroad, should have at his command greater resources than his. But it is impossible not to speculate upon

what the after-history of Germany might have been if the Elector who loved and protected Luther had, at the very crisis of his fortune, been placed at the rudder of the State.

The formal proceedings of the election began at Frankfurt on the 17th of June; on the 28th Charles was unanimously chosen Emperor. The "capitulation" which he was required to sign consisted of thirty-four articles. Besides promising in general terms to protect the rights and privileges of all Estates of the Empire, he bound himself to enter into no alliance with foreign States, to impose no tax, to summon no Diet without the consent of the Electors; he was not voluntarily to enter upon any war, but to defend the Empire if attacked; he was to bring no foreign soldiers into the Empire; and to appoint to its offices only men of native birth and good standing. The language of intercourse between himself and the Estates was to be either German or Latin. The "Reichsregiment" was to be re-established; the increasing Papal demands of every kind to be brought within bounds; the coinage to be reformed. Other articles were intended to save the rights of the Princes and other lower grades of the political hierarchy; no one was to be placed under the ban of the Empire unheard, or without just cause; no new laws were to be enacted except in accordance with the Golden Bull and with the assent of the Estates. The first Diet of the new reign was summoned to meet at Nürnberg. Charles promised, lastly, to come to Germany to receive his crown, to reside within the Empire as much as possible, and at a convenient season to go to Rome to be crowned by the Pope.

These articles much more express the wish of the seven Electors to interpose themselves as a ruling order in the State between Emperor and people, than give any indication of the course which attempts at administrative reform actually took in Germany. It will be enough to remark in this place that, in pursuance of them, Charles was crowned at Aachen on the 23d of October 1520.[1]

[1] For the story of Charles's election see Ranke, *Deutsche Geschichte im Zeitalter der Reformation*, vol. i. pp. 248-303; R. Rösler, *Die Kaiserwahl Karls V*; Mignet, *Une Election à l'Empire en 1519*, *Revue des deux Mondes*, 1854, pp. 209-264; Baumgarten, *Geschichte Karls V*, vol. i. pp. 102-158.

CHAPTER VII

THE YEAR 1520: LUTHER'S APPEAL TO THE NATION

No great revolution in thought, and especially no great revolution in religious thought, wholly depends upon the intellectual activity of a single thinker. It is, at least in part, the function of a powerful mind, a vivid personality, to gather into one focus tendencies of thought and feeling widely diffused, in a less concrete and concentrated form, through society, to give consciousness to emotions that before were half unconsciously felt, to find articulate voice for convictions that were only silently entertained. The question always arises, Did the age make the man, or the man mould the age?—and can never be fully answered in either sense. Forces act and react; there is a subtle correspondence between the master-thinker and the society which his thoughts quicken and change; at any other time, in any other circumstances, he would be impossible; yet again he bends circumstance to his purposes, and leads on a new time. The more individual a leader of men is, and the more he stands out from the common level, the easier it is to trace the reaction of contemporary tendencies upon him; sometimes opposition strengthens the tenacity of his purpose, sometimes he acts in the line of least resistance; often forces which rise out of a strange region of thought and feeling deflect him from his course; and again he may become the unconscious mouthpiece of passions with which he sympathises only in part. All this was true of Luther, though perhaps never so true as in the earlier stages of his revolt from Rome. No sooner had he ventured out from the retirement of his cell at Wittenberg,

and become involved in the current of German thought, than he found himself in the presence of intellectual and social forces which in part determined the line of his development. There was the strong feeling of anger and disgust, which the vices of the clergy and the corruptions of the system which they administered aroused in the common people of Germany. There was the revolt against exactions and oppressions, which patriots represented as the work of an alien power. There was the slowly growing rebellion against scholasticism, against monkery, against mediævalism in general, of which Erasmus and the humanists were the leaders. There was the desire for the reform of the Church and the revival of religion, which manifested itself on the one side in the Greek New Testament of 1516 and all that gathered round it, and on the other in the popular broadsheets and pamphlets which circulated from hand to hand of citizen and peasant. National and political was strangely mingled with ethical and religious feeling, and, for different reasons and with different methods, the learned and the ignorant found themselves in pursuit of the same object. And the year 1520, in which these forces were still in strongest interaction but had not yet found their resultant, was decisive in the history of the Reformation. It was that year which saw the publication of the books in which Luther laid down the principles of the revolt: the Address to the German Nobility, the Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church, the tractate on the Freedom of a Christian Man. In June 1520 the Pope solemnly anathematises him in a Bull, which he no less solemnly burns in December. In April 1521 he appears before the Emperor and the States of Germany at the Diet of Worms.

Nothing more vividly illustrates the fact that Europe in 1520 was one literary republic than the rapidity with which Luther's first books became known. Myconius,[1] it is impossible to say on what authority, declares that in a fortnight the Ninety-five Theses had run through all Germany, in a month through all Christendom. The assertion is rendered credible by the number of editions of Luther's earlier works which are still extant. Of the *Exposition of the Penitential Psalms* the

[1] Myconius, p. 23.

earliest authorities enumerate nine issues between 1517 and 1525. The book against Tetzel, *Eine Freiheit des Sermons päpstlichen Ablass und Gnade belangend*, ran in a very short time through eleven editions. Of the *Ten Commandments preached to the people of Wittenberg*, there were five editions in Latin and six in German. The *Sermo de Virtute Excommunicationis* of 1518 was almost immediately reprinted nine times. Of the *Sermon on the Contemplation of the Sufferings of Christ*, of 1519, there are twenty-four editions in German and one in Latin. Six editions of the *Resolutio de Potestate Papae*, all printed before the end of 1520, are still extant. What the size of these editions was does not appear; but a definite fact of this kind is that the *Address to the German Nobility* was published at the end of June 1520, and that by the middle of August four thousand copies had been sold. As early as October 1518, Froben, the famous printer of Basel, acting on the suggestion of Beatus Rhenanus, who was then his corrector of the press, made the first attempt at a collected edition of Luther's works. They were soon spread all over Europe. Froben writes to Luther (February 14th, 1519) "that all the editions, with the exception of ten copies, were already exhausted; he had never made a more fortunate venture in any book. Six hundred copies had been sent into France and Spain; others had been distributed through Italy; others again had gone to England and to Brabant. The Cardinal of Sion, Matthias Schinner, had been loud in his approbation; so too the Bishop of Basel, Christopher von Uttenheim, was an admirer of Luther." A few weeks after the date of this letter even the ten copies were gone; on the 23d of May a friend writes to Agrippa von Nettesheim that he has searched all Basel in vain for one, and that a new edition was talked of at Strassburg. A second edition, again printed at Basel, actually followed in February 1519, and a third in August of the same year. In November 1520, when the excitement had risen to a still greater height, Glareanus writes to Zwingli that he had heard of a bookseller who, at the last Frankfurt fair, had sold no fewer than one thousand four hundred of Luther's books, a thing hitherto unheard of. Nor was answering encouragement from distant friends wanting. Le Fèvre d'Etaples, in April 1519, bade

Beatus Rhenanus greet Luther in his name; while a little later Peter Tschudi wrote to him from Paris that Luther's works were received there by all scholars with open arms. John Hess reported to Lange that Luther had many friends in Italy. We have already seen that the *Exposition of the Lord's Prayer* was very soon translated into Italian and Bohemian. In Switzerland Luther's works circulated as freely as in Germany itself.[1]

In May 1519 Erasmus wrote to Luther: "There are many in England who have the highest opinion of your writings, and those men of the greatest importance."[2] But more definite evidence of the extent to which England had been touched by rising controversy in Germany is afforded by a curious document recently published—the Day-book of John Dorne, a bookseller of Oxford, in which he entered all the books that he sold in the year 1520. As might be expected, there was a large demand for the various works of Erasmus, who not only had a peculiarly English reputation, but whose friendship at Oxford with Colet and More must have been yet fresh in men's memories. Ulrich von Hutten furnishes three entries to the Day-book—two of an unspecified dialogue, one of the *Febris;* while there are two of the *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum.* The name of Luther occurs thirteen times. There are two copies of the *Opera Lutheri,* probably the Basel edition of 1518. One copy of the *Commentary on the Galatians* and one of the *Disputation of Luther at Leipzig* (probably the official report of 1519) are noted. One copy of the *Responsio ad Dialogum Sylv. Prieratis* was sold. But the most popular book was the *Resolutio de Potestate Papae,* which appears, if John Dorne's abbreviated entries are rightly interpreted, no less than eight times. Besides these there is a book which apparently is on the other side of the controversy, *Condemnatio Lutheri,* but really the decrees of condemnation passed on his books by the Universities of Köln and Louvain, and printed

[1] Weimar ed. vol. i. pp. 154, 380, 394, 634; vol. ii. pp. 131, 180; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 457, 478; Hottinger, *Helvetische Kirchengeschichte,* vol. iii. p. 87; Enders, *Briefw. Luther's,* vol. i. p. 420; vol. ii. p. 354 *seq.;* Löscher, vol. iii. p. 81; Fabricius, *Centifolium Lutheranum,* pp. 318, 766; Herminjard, *Correspondence des Reformateurs,* vol. i. pp. 45, 47; Kolde, *Anal. Luth.* p. 10; Zwingli, *Opp.* vol. vii. p. 151.

[2] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 445 B.

by Luther himself, with his reply. In what precise relation this bookseller stood to the reading public of Oxford or of England generally it is impossible to say: in all probability the works of one who, like Luther, was soon branded as a heretic, were brought to England privately by merchants, and passed, with some precaution of concealment, from hand to hand. Still, the facts as they stand are sufficiently remarkable, and testify to the rapidity with which news of Luther's attack upon the system of the Church travelled to even distant seats of learning. But it is to be noted that none of the great books of 1520 appear to have found their way to Oxford in the course of that year.[1]

It is not easy to estimate the extent to which, up to this time, Luther had touched the common people of Germany. We can enumerate, without much difficulty, the names of the well-known humanists, the dignified churchmen, the distinguished laymen who were his friends and admirers; but to find out what was his influence upon the burgher and the peasant, we are thrown back upon anonymous broadsheets and satires, which rarely give any indication of origin or date. Up to this time his most characteristic works had been written in Latin, and therefore made their appeal only to the cultivated classes. Others, however, such as his *Exposition of the Lord's Prayer for simple Laymen*, as well as some of the sermons, which enjoyed the largest circulation, were in German; while his younger colleagues were always busy in translating his more learned works into the vernacular. But in 1520, in the publication of his *Address to the German Nobility*, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and *The Freedom of a Christian Man*, all of which were either written in the language of the people or at once translated into it, he may be said to have definitely taken up a new position, not so much in opposition to as by the side of the humanists. Everybody in Europe that pretended to be an educated man had read Erasmus's *Colloquies*, *Adages*, *Praise of Folly*, and had enjoyed or resented his lively polemic against monkish superstitions and self-indulgence; and Hutten, in the biting satire of his

[1] Collectanea of the Oxford Hist. Soc. 1st series. *The Daily Ledger of John Dorne*, 1520. Ed. F. Madan, M.A.

Dialogues, addressed himself to the same audience. But as long as opposition to the corruptions of the Church and the vices of the clergy was confined within limits of Latin it was an esoteric thing, like the philosophic contempt with which Mutian, from his scholarly retreat at Gotha, regarded the squabbles of the theologians. It was reserved for Luther, in whose footsteps, before the end of 1520, Hutten followed, to throw himself upon the German people, to speak to them in the only language which they understood, to appeal to their patriotic instincts, to point to a redress of the wrongs which they deeply felt. It is not within the compass of my present purpose to define Luther's exact relation to the development of the German language; it is enough to say that, at a moment at which the Latin threatened to supersede it as the vehicle of cultivated thought, he suffused it with the glow of his own genius, and made it a literary tongue, capable of expression, clear, vivid, pathetic, and, above all, strong. The little quarto pamphlets, brown, worm-eaten, each with its engraved and often allegorical title-page, which collectors still prize, passed from hand to hand, in farms and workshops, giving a clear voice to dimly-felt religious aspirations, and definition to long-cherished discontents. As time went on it became more and more evident that Luther was at the head of a really national movement, and that he was formidable to Emperor and Pope, because, more than any other man, he represented the desires and purposes of the people of Germany.

Such popular pamphlets as can with confidence be assigned to this early date are hardly theological at all. Their authors do not touch upon the controversial aspects of Luther's revolt against Rome. They are severe upon the devourer of benefices —the man who goes to Rome, makes his way into the favour of some cardinal or high official, by services often too disgraceful to be named, and receiving church preferment in Germany as his reward, spends the rest of his days in sloth and self-indulgence. Such men make no pretence of shepherding the souls entrusted to them; their parishes are utterly neglected; they spread the contagion of carelessness round about them; they bring the Church into ill-repute. The habitual infraction of the law of clerical celibacy, the pomp

and worldliness of the higher clergy, the avarice and self-indulgence of monks, and the all-devouring greed of Rome—these are the evils which demand a remedy. And Luther, with whom Erasmus is often coupled, appears as the restorer of ancient morals and primitive piety. These broadsheets have little that can be called Evangelical or Protestant about them. They give the impression that those who wrote and read them would be quite satisfied with the moral purification of the existing system. Their authors have not at all comprehended, as perhaps Luther himself at that time had not, the dissolvent force upon mediæval Christianity of the principles which were slowly taking form at Wittenberg. But they were preparing the seed-bed for them. When it was made clear that Rome's only policy was suppression, and that it was useless to look to the new Emperor for help in the direction of reform, the commonalty were ready to follow Luther into paths of popular revolt.[1]

The quarrel between Reuchlin and the theologians of Köln, which had so sharply divided learned opinion in Germany, was now in its final stage. It was in March 1514 that Reuchlin had been acquitted at Speier, in July 1516 that his second acquittal at Rome had been followed by the Pope's mandate, ordering the suspension of all proceedings in the case. The *Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum* assumed their complete form in the spring of 1517, and were promptly condemned by the Pope. Then followed the armed intervention of Sickingen, and the deposition of Hoogstraten from his dignities, till at last, in June 1520, the case was finally closed by the Brief of Leo X, which reversed all previous judicial decisions and restored the Inquisitor to his office. The effect of this long controversy, which had extended over nearly eleven years, had been to divide the learned men of Germany, or those who thought themselves learned, into two hostile camps. It was the old scholarship against the new. It was the devotees of the scholastic philosophy against the children of the classical revival. It was the theologians against

[1] Conf. Schade, *Satiren und Pasquille aus der Reformationszeit*, 3 vols., and Aug. Baur, *Deutschland in den Jahren*, 1517-1525, *betrachtet im Lichte gleichzeitiger anonymer und pseudonymer deutscher Volks-und Flugschriften.*

the "poets." It was the men who held what learning they had at the service and under the censorship of the Church against the men who cared for learning for its own sake, and feared no conclusions to which it might lead them. There were some among the older humanists who occupied a middle position, as for instance Wimpheling, who was called "medius Reuchlinista" ("half a Reuchlinist"),[1] men who had pursued their studies in full accord with the Church, and who regarded with apprehension whatever looked like revolt against her. But it is not unfair to qualify the assailants of Reuchlin as obscurantists, or his defenders as the friends of light and learning. And there was a hot struggle between them for the possession of the Universities, the training of the rising generation, the approval of educated opinion.

Into this current of thought and feeling swept the stream of Luther's movement, as the Arve joins the Rhone at Geneva, bearing with it very different waters, which are nevertheless destined to mix and flow in the same channel. Luther was no humanist at heart. The springs of his life were all theological. In his education he had enjoyed the advantage of partial emancipation from the old methods of thought, and had drunk, though not deeply, at the rediscovered fountains of scholarship. But he had stood outside the humanist circle at Erfurt, from which his entrance into the monastic life seemed to have finally cut him off. And when, as we have seen, the intellectual activity which his spiritual struggles had interrupted was resumed, it was still directed by theological considerations. The acquaintance with Greek, which he laboured to increase, the knowledge of Hebrew, which he for the first time acquired, were devoted to the exposition of the Scriptures; and it was his desire, as far as possible, to give the classical studies of Wittenberg the same direction. So that although, as time wore on, it became evident that he and the humanists had the same object of attack—the Church of Rome and its corruptions, they did not assail it from the same side, or with the same weapons. What with them was almost an accident of the strife, was to him its essence. They struck for free learning; he for pure doctrine and a reformed Church.

[1] *Antea*, p. 72.

There was at first no great approximation between Wittenberg and the humanists. In a letter, written in August 1514, to Spalatin Luther warmly espouses the cause of Reuchlin; but with the exception of one or two slighting references to the *Letters of the Obscure Men*, there is no further mention of the matter in his correspondence for four years. In the meantime Erasmus's New Testament and his edition of St. Jerome had been published; and Luther had fully grasped the essential difference between the theological tendency of the Master of Rotterdam and his own. Erasmus did not sufficiently put forward Christ and the grace of God; it was a significant thing that he should place Jerome on a level with Augustine. "I read over Erasmus," says Luther, "but my inclination towards him decreases from day to day." Nor is evidence lacking that Luther's indifference to the humanists was reciprocated by them. Hutten, in a letter, written in April 1518, to Count Hermann von Neuenar, a canon of Köln, who was also a friend of Reuchlin, informs him in contemptuous terms of a monk's quarrel as to indulgences which has broken out at Wittenberg, and expresses the hope that those enemies of the light may destroy one another in internecine strife. In a tone of even greater scorn Mosellanus announces to Erasmus the disputation which is about to take place at Leipzig between Eck and Carlstadt: "the Democriti," he says, "would find sufficient matter for laughter in it." At the end of 1518, however, when, after his fruitless interview with Cajetan, he was feeling the necessity of gathering round himself all possible friends and allies, Luther wrote, at the instigation of Melanchthon, a letter to Reuchlin. This letter, which afterwards appeared in the *Illustrium Virorum Epistolae*, was not only a formal compliment and tender of allegiance to the old scholar, but a distinct assertion that his cause and Luther's were substantially identical. Their enemies were the same, he said, and their methods of attack; he opposed them with the same constancy of mind as Reuchlin, though with less ability and learning. But the letter, though couched in the most respectful terms, drew out no answer. The old man was weary of a conflict in which he had been unwillingly involved, and which had wrecked the

peace of his declining years. He had nothing of the Reformer in him, and probably would never have felt very deeply the corruptions of a Church which allowed him to pursue his Cabbalistical studies in quiet; still less was he disposed to cast in his lot with a new and revolutionary movement. Once we find him sending a kindly message to Luther through Melanchthon; at a later period he prevented Eck from burning Luther's books in Ingolstadt. But this was all. We have already seen that he quarrelled with his nephew, in whom he had taken so much pride, for his adherence to the Wittenberg theology. At the beginning of 1521, just before Luther's appearance at the Diet of Worms, Hutten addresses to him an indignant letter, reproaching him with having fallen away from his old friends. What Reuchlin wanted was peace; a truce to controversy, a cessation of persecutions; and he found it in reconciliation with the Church. He died in 1522.[1]

At the end of March 1519, Luther, this time under the influence of Capito, wrote a similar letter to Erasmus. Nothing could be more flattering than its terms; it was a letter from a humble member of the literary republic to its acknowledged head. It did not propose any definite terms of alliance, its writer was evidently uncertain of his ground, and trying to feel his way to a more confidential communication. Erasmus's answer, dated the 30th of May, was perfectly polite, but he made it plain that he would not depart from his attitude of neutrality. He spoke of the excitement caused by Luther's books, of the public rumours which associated himself with their authorship, and made him the standard-bearer of the movement, of the clamour and calumny which were the weapons of the orthodox theologians. With the exception of the *Operationes in Psalmos*, which he very much liked, he had not read Luther's books; he neither approved nor disapproved whatever was contained in them. He threw out a characteristic hint that such subjects were best discussed by the learned only, and were not fit for popular appeal; he advised a quieter and less

[1] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 13, 37, 38, 39, 52, 87, 196, 404; *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. i. p. 167; Geiger, *Briefwechsel Reuchlin's*, pp. 327, 357; *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 404 D.

eager mode of treating them, alleging the example of Christ and Paul. It was not a letter with which it was easy to find fault; but it invited no reply, and it received none.[1]

All the allusions to Luther and his affairs contained in Erasmus's letters about this time are in the same tone. Common rumour will persist in identifying him with the Wittenberg movement, and he does not like it. Reuchlin, Erasmus, Luther,—these names came naturally together from men's lips; but the too reckless satire of the *Letters of the Obscure Men* had driven him out of the camp of the Reuchlinists, and he is still less willing to be made answerable for the new ecclesiastical demagogue. What he cares for is the "cause of good letters," which he does not wish to have confounded with the quarrel of any man, or wrecked in storms of theological controversy. He does not know Luther; he has not read his books, except, perhaps, a page here and there. The man, he admits, bears a high character, but he cannot approve the violence of his tone. As to his doctrine, he neither accuses nor excuses it. From none of Erasmus's letters at this time would it be possible to derive the slightest notion of what it was that Luther assailed in the theological system of the Church, or what were the weapons of his attack. Erasmus's tone, it must be confessed, varies with the person to whom he is writing; to Leo X, to Cardinal Albert of Mainz, to Wolsey, he insists on his own obedience to the Church, and emphasises his ignorance and independence of Luther; to Melanchthon, to Pirckheimer, to Oekolampadius, he shows the more friendly side of what is still a neutrality, and makes it clear that he has no desire to quarrel with Wittenberg. But he does not become more friendly to Luther as time wears on, and the accent of controversy grows sharper; he has no wish to take a side, but he sees that neutrality becomes every day less possible.

But while there is a remarkable similarity in all Erasmus's utterances on this subject about this time, it is only fair to point out that there were moments at which the insight of the man of letters got the better of the timidity of the theologian, and he saw that, up to a certain point at least, Luther's line of movement coincided with his own. In his letter to Erasmus

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 247; *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 444.

Luther had ventured to allude to passages in the Preface to the new edition of the *Enchiridion* which seemed to be in accord with his own teaching. Both had said hard things of the monks, and especially of the mendicant orders; both were assailed by the same enemies, fighting with the same weapons. In a letter which Erasmus addressed in November 1519 to the Archbishop of Mainz, and which contains the usual protestations that he has nothing to do with Luther, occurs also the following remarkable passage: "Of the articles which are made a ground of objection to Luther, I say nothing now; I speak only of the manner and the occasion. Luther has dared to doubt of indulgences, as to which others had before made assertions, but were too shameless. He has dared to speak with somewhat too little moderation of the power of the Roman Pontiff, of which others, of whom the chief were three of the order of Preachers,—Alvarus, Sylvester, and the Cardinal of St. Sixtus, had before written much too immoderately. He has dared to despise the decrees of St. Thomas, decrees which the Dominicans almost prefer to the Gospels. He has dared to discuss certain scruples as to confession, a matter in which the monks ensnare the consciences of men without end. He has dared to neglect, to some extent, the decrees of the Schoolmen, things to which they themselves attribute too much, in regard to which, nevertheless, they differ among themselves, and which, last of all, they do not hesitate to change, substituting new things for old. And it was a torment to pious minds to hear in the schools hardly any mention of evangelical doctrine, and that the sacred authors, formerly approved by the Church, were held to be antiquated; yea, even from the pulpit hardly anything was said of Christ, almost everything of the power of the Pope and the opinions of the Moderns." But it did not help matters when a copy of this letter was surreptitiously procured and printed, probably by Ulrich von Hutten, who was then in the Archbishop's service. The great scholar might be pardoned for feeling that even his impartiality was being used against him, and that he was being involved in a movement which he only partly approved, and was quite unable to control.[1]

A curious and characteristic story completes the picture of

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 247; *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 515 F.

Erasmus's mood in these years. In October 1520 Charles V was crowned at Aachen. Frederick of Saxony, accompanied by Spalatin, went to be present at the ceremony in his official capacity as Marshal of the Empire, but, intercepted by gout, got no farther on his way than Köln. "Thereby at Köln," says Spalatin, "the highly-learned man Erasmus Roterodamus was with this Elector of Saxony, and talked with him of all manner of things; and was asked whether it was his opinion that Dr. Martin Luther had erred in his writing and preaching. Whereupon he answered in Latin, 'Yes, indeed, in two things, that he has attacked, first, the Pope's crown, and next the monks' bellies.' Thereupon this Elector smiled, and bethought him of this answer hardly a year before his death." It was after this interview, or another a few days later, that Erasmus, going with Spalatin into the house of the Count of Neuenar, hastily committed to paper certain "axiomata," in which he briefly gave his view of the whole controversy. These he had no sooner written than with characteristic caution he asked for them back again, fearing lest they should bring him into trouble with Aleander and Caraccioli, the Papal agents, who were then in Köln. Before a year had passed, however, the document had found its way to the press, through what channel it is now impossible to say. As might be supposed from the circumstances under which it was written, it represents Erasmus's relation to Luther on its friendliest side. Erasmus takes up no theological position, but advises caution, condemns the severity of the Pope's bull, sustains Luther's claim to a fair trial, and speaks with some contempt of his adversaries. Had not the tone of this paper been so completely that of Erasmus himself in his more courageous moments, it might seem to have been an echo caught from the Elector's. But indeed the controversy had long overpassed these bounds.[1]

It has been too much the custom to put down the attitude of Erasmus to Luther and his movement to mere timidity or selfish caution. He was a sickly scholar, it is said, whose character was cast in no heroic mould; living on terms of intimacy with great men in Church and State, and unwilling

[1] Spalatin, *Fried. der Weise*, p. 164; Seckendorf, lib. i. sec. 34, § lxxxi.; Erl. ed. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 238.

to imperil his position with them by avowed sympathy with revolution. No doubt this is a part of the truth, though only a small part. Erasmus was constitutionally averse to loud talk and violent action; irony, not invective, was his favourite rhetorical weapon, and abuses which moved others to indignation excited him only to mocking satire. But it should always be recollected that he had a method of reformation of his own, the method of literary culture; that up to the year 1517 this method appeared to be in successful operation, and that he suddenly found its character compromised, and its issue endangered by Luther's movement. He tried in vain to evade the shock of theological opposition which first Reuchlin and then Luther drew down upon all religious innovators. He found not only that he was charged with complicity in a line of action with which he imperfectly sympathised, but that the new Reformer carried away with him all the young and promising minds of the humanist party. He never gave his adhesion to the peculiar tenets of Luther's theology; if we may anticipate the use of terms, he was upon the Catholic, not the Protestant, side of the controversy. He probably saw from the first the danger, as he conceived it to be, that the theological element in Luther's movement would overbear every other, and felt that the time would come at which he would be compelled to say, "Wherever Lutheranism reigns, there good letters perish."[1] So that, if he were to be true to himself, he could not act otherwise than he did. It is a mistake to find fault with him because he did not join to a command of literary culture, a knowledge of antiquity, a mastery of style, which Luther never possessed, the fiery religious earnestness, the absolute fearlessness of consequences which are necessary to make a revolution in religion.

Criticism has completely established the fact that the *Letters of the Obscure Men*, which so decisively intervened in the affair of Reuchlin, were the production of that band of Erfurt humanists of which Mutian was the head. After the publication of that famous satire, Crotus, its chief author, went to Italy; the leadership of the party silently passed from Mutian to Eoban Hess, and the enthusiasm of its members was trans-

[1] *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 1139 B.

ferred from Reuchlin to Erasmus. The great humanist was in 1517 and 1518 at the zenith of his fame, and now that the crisis of Reuchlin's fate had passed, it was felt how much more attractive, how far better calculated to awaken youthful enthusiasm, were the *Adages*, the *Praise of Folly*, the *New Testament* of 1516 than the old Hebraist's mystical speculations on the Cabbala. It became a fashion to make pilgrimages from Erfurt to the Netherlands, to visit the master of all erudition; one such was made by Eoban Hess, another by Justus Jonas. When Edward Lee, afterwards Archbishop of York, attacked Erasmus with all the virulence of obscurantist orthodoxy for his great contribution to theological scholarship—the Greek New Testament, the humanists of Erfurt fell foul of him, as they had before fallen foul of the monks of Köln. Eoban Hess lectured on the *Enchiridion*, Crafft on the *Encomium Moriae*. Much indifferent Latin verse was produced at Erfurt about this time; besides Eoban Hess, inexhaustibly fertile in every metrical form, there was Euricius Cordus, who embodied his loves and hatreds in innumerable epigrams, and by both Erasmus was largely celebrated. His influence was religious as well as literary; the long letter is still extant in which he persuaded Justus Jonas to abandon law for theology, little thinking that he was preparing for Luther one of his most intimate and efficient allies. Shortly after his return from the Netherlands, at Easter 1519, Justus Jonas was elected Rector of the University, and commemorated the event on an illuminated page of the matriculation book, which recorded his visit to Erasmus. A more important result of that visit was the reform in the studies of the University which the new Rector undertook. Henceforth the true spirit of humanism was to prevail in them, and provision was made for the institution and maintenance of lectures on the Greek and Latin classics.[1]

But a change was impending. Erfurt was too near Wittenberg not in some degree to catch its infection. The two universities had been closely united for some years after the foundation of the younger, and the double relationship of Erfurt to Mainz and to Saxony placed it in the focus of the new movement. John Lange, who enjoyed Luther's confidential friend-

[1] Kawerau, *Briefwechsel Justus Jonas*, *Erfurt. Univ.* vol. ii. p. 307; Krause, vol. i. p. 21; Weissenborn, *Acten der Eoban Hess*, vol. i. p. 302.

ship, was living there as Prior of the Augustinian Convent, and though not actually belonging to the band of humanists, many of whom were his old class-mates, was on friendly terms with them. And in October 1519 Crotus Rubianus, who was about to return northwards from Italy, wrote from Bologna two letters to Luther. They had been friends before the latter entered the monastic life; but that event parted them, and communication between them seems to have wholly ceased. The first letter simply gives the last news of Eck's proceedings in Rome, the second is an impassioned proffer of allegiance. "Often, Martin," says Crotus, "when men have spoken of you, have I been wont to call you the father of our country, worthy of a golden statue and a yearly festival; you, who first dared to call away the people of the Lord from noxious opinions and to assert true piety. Go on as you have begun; leave an example to posterity; for you do these things not without divine assistance. This was the purpose of Providence, when, before the town of Erfurt, as you were returning from your parents, the bolt from heaven struck you down, like another Paul, and drove you from our companionship, most sad at your departure, into the Augustinian Convent. And although our opportunities of intimacy after that were few, nevertheless my mind always remained yours, as you might have seen from the letter which last year I wrote to you at Augsburg, if indeed it was delivered to you." In the following April Hutten, who had already opened the communication with Luther of which we must presently speak, met his old friend at Bamberg, and in consultation with him no doubt drew closer the bonds which were about to unite the Reformer with the Erfurt humanists. Eoban Hess was prepared to pour the stream of his facile enthusiasm into this fresh channel; Cordus had already found matter for many a bitter epigram in the corruptions and oppressions of the Church. It was significant of the change that was setting in, that at the end of 1519 the University declined to pronounce any judgment on the disputation at Leipzig; and when at Michaelmas 1520 Crotus Rubianus was elected Rector, the alliance between the Reformers and the humanists was complete.[1]

[1] *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. i. pp. 307, 311; Enders, vol. ii. pp. 204, 211.

A curious monument of this fusion of feeling (which, it may be remarked in passing, did not last very long) is extant in the illuminated page which, according to custom, the new Rector prefixed to the entries made during his term of office. It is entirely heraldic. The centre is occupied by Crotus's own arms—a hand coming out of a cloud holding a hunter's horn, in evident allusion to his name Johann Jäger. Round this are the heraldic devices of sixteen of his friends, some humanists, some Reformers, who perhaps never before or after found themselves associated in so friendly a contact. The four corners are held by the great names of Luther, Erasmus, Reuchlin, and Mutian. The other shields are those of Hutten, Eoban Hess, Justus Jonas, Melanchthon, Lange, Henry Eberbach, Forchheimius, Urbanus Rhegius, Draco, Adam Crafft, Joachim Camerarius, and Justus Menius. Underneath stands the legend—

> "Ut numquam potuit sine charis vivere amicis,
> Hic etiam solus noluit esse Crotus;
> Picta vides variis fulgere toreumata signis,
> His sociis nostrae praefuit ille scholae"—

while the initials E. H. refer to the pen of Eoban Hess. There is something almost pathetic in the aspect of this brilliant heraldic scroll, which is illustrated by so many famous names and commemorates transitory as well as durable friendships.[1]

But with a certain class of humanists Luther had made his own way. In every populous German city, whether the seat of a university or not, there were men who cultivated the new learning, kept up an active correspondence with one another, and felt that they belonged to the one republic of letters. Among these, both of the older and the younger generation, Luther was the occasion of great searchings of heart. Some of the seniors felt, like Reuchlin, indisposed to embark in their old age on what promised to be a boundless ocean of controversy; the Church, though they would willingly see it reformed, was good enough for them, and they had no sympathy with the peculiar theological opinions which were the mainspring of the new movement. For others, Luther

[1] Weissenborn, vol. ii. p. 317; Kampschulte, vol. i. p. 258.

more decisively exercised the function of a prophet, in revealing their secret thoughts and making them conscious of their own position. Some of these, Bucer, Brenz, Schnepf, at Heidelberg; Hedio and Capito, at Mainz; Oekolampadius, at Augsburg, were afterwards chief instruments of the Reformation either in Germany or Switzerland, men who, though at a distance from Wittenberg, owed their first religious inspiration to Luther's writings and took the tone of their life from him. At Leipzig we find Mosellanus, a professed humanist, lecturing in 1519 on the letters of St. Paul, and declaring that "all the studious youths are eager in the pursuit of sacred literature."[1] On the other hand, Eck and Emser and Cochlaeus, all of whom, in various degree, would have a right to be counted among the humanists, found occupation and notoriety in bitter and persistent opposition to Luther. The old antithesis between theologian and poet was in two ways being obliterated. First, the new learning was conquering ground hitherto resolutely held against it by the champions of scholasticism and the Church, so that to read Greek and Latin was no longer a sufficient ground of ecclesiastical suspicion; and next the religious principles of Wittenberg had made a fresh line of cleavage. It was quite possible with Erasmus to love "good letters," and yet to turn a cold face of neutrality to Luther.

It would answer no good purpose to give a list of those who in all the great towns of Lower Germany and along the banks of the Rhine were either receptive of Luther's influence or were preaching doctrines more or less akin to his. It may be enough to mention two cities, Augsburg and Nürnberg, each of which held a Lutheran circle; while each in its way was a centre-point of German commerce, and an example of the finest development of its civic life. At Augsburg, at the time of which I am speaking, Conrad Peutinger and Christopher Langemantel were examples of the new influence among the rich and educated citizens. Two canons of the Cathedral Church, Conrad and Bernard Adelmann, belonged to the humanist society, of which Willibald Pirckheimer of Nürnberg was the acknowledged head, liberal churchmen who were

[1] Tentzel, *Reliquiae Epp. Mutiani*, p. 43.

unwilling to admit that devotion to learning was incompatible with faithfulness to the Church. In 1520 Oekolampadius, afterwards among the foremost of the Reformers of Switzerland, was preacher in the Cathedral of Augsburg; and when, in that year, he retired in a strange fit of devotion into a monastery, Urbanus Rhegius, who had been vicar-general at Constanz, and before whom a lifetime of reforming energy still stretched, was invited to fill his place. And it was in December 1519 that an effective blow for Luther was struck from Augsburg. In a pamphlet which Eck contributed to the controversy between Emser and Luther he made the scornful remark that all the clergy, except a few ignorant canons, were against the innovator. The challenge was at once taken up, and an anonymous little work, *The Reply of the Ignorant Lutheran Canons to John Eck*, which was ascribed to one of the Adelmann brothers, but was really the work of Oekolampadius, showed, much to Eck's chagrin, that the ignorant canons were quite able to take care of themselves. The book has a special interest in being perhaps the first in which the word "Lutheran" was publicly adopted as a party designation.[1]

I have already mentioned the sermons which Staupitz delivered in Nürnberg in the winter of 1516-1517; the effect which they produced was deepened and confirmed by the subsequent preaching of Link. The Augustinian convent was the centre of the new movement, which spread to every class in the city. With Christopher Scheurl, who had been professor at Wittenberg from 1507 to 1511, Luther kept up a confidential correspondence: to Hieronymus Ebner, another of the city Fathers, he dedicated an early work. Although Pirckheimer was closely connected, in the persons of his admirable and accomplished sisters, with the St. Clara convent at Nürnberg, there was nothing as yet in the new religious teaching that shocked his sense of right or offended his prejudices; while Lazarus Spengler, the city scribe, a man whose high character and great ability gave him an influence in Nürnberg disproportionate to his official station, was an avowed disciple of Luther. Hans Sachs, shoemaker and master-singer, who stood at the head of the poetic guild, which is one of the illustrations

[1] Erl. ed. *Opp.* v. a. vol. iv. p. 59.

of Nürnberg at this period, had seen Luther at Augsburg. It is recorded of him that in 1522 he had already made a collection of forty of the Reformer's books; and in 1523 he celebrates his hero's praises in a poem, "The Nightingale of Wittenberg." Perhaps in the whole of German literature there is no more affecting passage than the entry which Albert Dürer makes in his diary when, as he is travelling in the Netherlands, he hears that Luther, on his return from the Diet of Worms, has disappeared, and fears that he has been betrayed to his death. The dull routine of entries, recording the places which he has visited, the friends who have hospitably received him, the money which he spent, is suddenly interrupted, and he breaks into a passion of tears and prayer, which is often stayed and as often renewed, as if sorrow and indignation could not find vent enough. It is too long to quote entire, too sacred to mutilate; we seem to hear in it the voice of the deepest religious gratitude to a quickening teacher lost for ever; the cry of one noble soul to another, bound to it in the closest spiritual bonds.[1]

Two contributions to the controversies in which Luther was engaged, made about this time from Nürnberg, are at once important in themselves, and curiously characteristic of their respective authors. The first, published some time in 1519, and written in German for the common people, was entitled "An Apology and Christian answer of an honourable Lover of the Divine truth of Holy Scripture, upon occasion of the contradiction of some; with reasons why Dr. Martin Luther's doctrine should not be rejected as unchristian, but rather should be held to be Christian." It was anonymous, but Spengler made no secret of the fact that he was the author. An avowedly controversial work more charitably moderate in its tone, more completely penetrated with a certain sober and modest devoutness, never was written; it produces at once the most favourable impression of the mind which gave it birth and of

[1] *Dürer's Briefe, Tagebücher und Reime*, ed. Thausing, p. 119. At the beginning of 1520 Dürer writes to Spalatin, "Und hilft mir Gott, dass ich zu Doctor Martinus Luther komme, so will ich ihn mit Fleiss abkonterfeien und in Kupfer stechen, zu einem dauernden Andenken des christlichen Mannes, der mir aus grossen Aengsten geholfen hat." *Ibid.* 42. Unhappily this intention, so far as we know, was never carried into effect.

the force and purity of the religious impulse out of which it sprang. The second was a Latin satire, *Eccius Dedolatus, der abgehobelte Eck*, which, recollecting that "Eck" in German means "a corner," we may translate "the corner planed away." It was published in 1520; its author announced himself as Joannes Franciscus Cattalambergius, Poet-Laureate, and the place and date of printing are not given. It was a furious satire against Eck, not without salt, but of the grossest and most personal kind; not only making the victim ridiculous, but trampling him under foot in the mire of scorn and contempt. It is a dialogue in the spirit, though not in the Latinity, of the *Letters of the Obscure Men*, but full of a savage earnestness, as if the writer had a private grudge to avenge, and would hold no terms with his enemy. The authorship was never acknowledged; but it was an open secret that the shaft was from Pirckheimer's quiver. At all events it was upon Pirckheimer that the insult was avenged: Eck was far too vain a man to forgive an assault which made him the laughing-stock of all learned Germany.[1]

There was, however, another element of popular feeling with which Luther had to reckon—the sentiment of German patriotism. That it was vague, inconsistent with itself, without fixed object or policy, did not prevent it from being strong. The revival of letters had led to the reopening of the records of the national past, the glories of Charlemagne and of Otho were not the less sympathetically because uncritically recounted, and men went back to the days when emperors did not tamely submit to the Roman yoke, but themselves nominated and deposed popes. The common people, to whom these things were little more than dim legends, saw with their own eyes the expropriation of German church revenues by a foreign race, who despised while they plundered them; every benefice held by a cardinal's nominee, all tax and toll that was poured into the bottomless gulf of Roman avarice, was felt by them as an injury inflicted upon their German nationality. What the patriots wanted was a strong Imperial government, ad-

[1] Both the *Schützred* and the *Eccius Dedolatus* will be found reprinted in Riederer's *Beytrag zu der Reformations-urkunden*, etc., Altdorf, 1762. The latter will also be found in *Opp. Hutteni*, ed. Böcking, vol. iv. p. 515.

ministering justice and keeping the peace without fear or favour, at home and abroad, once more widening the Empire to its ancient bounds, and making it in reality as well as in repute the most powerful monarchy in the world. That this desire was doomed to disappointment all subsequent German history tells with one voice; the active forces of politics worked in the opposite direction. The princes were intent upon rounding off their own territorial sovereignty; the minor nobility, the free cities, had no principle of cohesion, and were incapable of united action; no plan of common taxation could be devised which the several States would accept; not even a powerful Emperor like Charles V could force new organisation on unwilling feudatories. The ideal which the patriots had in their minds was essentially one belonging to a past age, which probably no cunning of statecraft, no enthusiasm of self-sacrifice, would have availed to recall; Germany was slowly moving towards the anarchy of the Thirty Years' War, and the territorial disintegration of the century that followed it. But in 1520 patriotism was still a living force, for it compelled, as we have seen, venal electors to choose an emperor who, whatever his other disqualifications, was at least of German blood.

The man who more than any other represents this phase of national feeling is Ulrich von Hutten. He returned from Italy to Germany in June 1517, and after a few months' interval, during which he prepared for the press Laurentius Valla's work *On the Donation of Constantine*, entered for the second time the service of Albert of Mainz. In the spring of 1519 he eagerly took part in the campaign against Duke Ulrich of Würtemberg, with whom he had a private blood feud. This was the turning-point of his career. During the short war he contracted a close intimacy with Franz von Sickingen, the celebrated partisan leader, whose history sheds so strange a light on the political disorganisation of Germany at this time, and induced him so to throw the shield of his protection over Reuchlin as for the moment to bring the Dominicans of Köln to their knees. In January 1520 he was again with Sickingen in his castle of Landstuhl, and endeavoured to win him to the side of Luther, as he had already won him for Reuchlin. The

result was a letter from Hutten to Melanchthon, followed by another a month later, written on the supposition that the first had miscarried, in which, on Sickingen's behalf, he offered Luther a refuge in his castle of Ebernburg. A similar letter reached the Reformer, perhaps before Sickingen's, from Sylvester von Schaumburg, a Franconian nobleman, who, sooner than he should fly to Bohemia, as common report averred that he was meditating, offered him the protection of a hundred of his own order. Luther's letters to both these new friends are no longer extant, but there is evidence enough that they put a fresh courage into him. "Schaumburg and Sickingen," he says to Spalatin, "have made me secure from the fear of men." He wishes the Elector to let the Cardinal of St. George know that if he is driven from Wittenberg it will only make matters worse, for he will then take refuge, not in heretical Bohemia, but in the midst of Germany, where there are those who are willing and able to protect him. It is the policy of the hour; Hutten urges it; Crotus writes from Bamberg to recommend it. Whether Luther ever seriously thought of adopting it, we do not know; as it was, the Elector's friendship never failed him.[1]

Franz von Sickingen was one of the independent nobles of the Rhineland, who, from small beginnings, had become a power in the German Empire. By services at the court of the Elector Palatine, by a system of family alliances and joint heirships, and by bold "fighting for their own hand," the Sickingens had won a position of considerable influence; and Schwicker von Sickingen, Franz's father, was lord of three fastnesses, Landstuhl, Ebernburg, and Hohenburg, each with many attached fiefs. He was as fierce a robber knight as any of his mediæval forefathers, as may be inferred from the fact that he laid a plot for surprising Köln and murdering its chief inhabitants, because in that city his dagger, which he was wearing in defiance of municipal laws, had been taken from him. From this beginning of the family fortunes, Franz, who had an undoubted faculty as a leader of men, went far. He carried on a great feud with the city of Worms. He led

[1] *Opp. Hutteni*, ed. Böcking, vol. i. 1942; De Wette, pp. 448, 451, 460, 469, pp. 320, 324, 340; Walch, vol. xv. p. 470.

border raids into France. He was put under the ban of the Empire by Maximilian, and by Maximilian again reconciled with it. When the contest for the Empire began, both candidates, Charles and Francis, strove to bind to their service, by pensions and honours, a leader who could bring into the field some thousands of disciplined men, and was willing to fly at any quarry, however high. He and his troops formed an important part of the expedition into Würtemberg, which deposed Duke Ulrich, and, as they lay not yet disbanded in the neighbourhood of Frankfurt, were a significant hint to the Electors not to choose the foreign candidate. At the moment of which we are speaking, Sickingen had been formally taken into the Imperial service: not that he and his men were part of any regular army, or had specific military duties to perform, but that they were bound to throw their weight into the Emperor's scale should the necessity arise. They were an *imperium in imperio*, an irregular military assemblage, held together by common interests and the ascendancy of a leader's character, but only imperfectly subordinated to the supreme authority in the State.

Some rude spirit of patriotism, partly inspired perhaps by Hutten, mingled with Sickingen's ambition. He regarded himself as the representative and champion of the lesser nobility, whose independence was threatened, and whose rights were invaded by the growing power of the princes. These robber nobles, for they were little better, had always been on terms of enmity with the Free Cities, whose burghers they thought it no shame to plunder upon the highway. There were indeed formalities to be observed, some colourable cause of quarrel to be found, a letter of feud to be delivered; but this done, the roads were no longer safe for the merchants of the offending community. In Hutten's dialogue *Inspicientes*, which was published in 1520, after his friendship with Sickingen had been formed, there is a literary defence of this state of things, which suggests the theory of the origin of society which Rousseau made popular two hundred years afterwards. The cities and their inhabitants are the fruits of a corrupt civilisation. They and their trade are the centres from which an enervating luxury diffuses itself. It can never

be well with Germany so long as their power is maintained and increases. On the other hand, the nobles, each living in his own castle, content with the produce of his own land, reproduce the conditions of a time when the country was great, prosperous, and happy. What inference could be plainer than that when Sickingen intercepted a convoy of merchants from Worms, and carried off their wares to the Ebernburg, he was not guilty of any vulgar robbery, but striking a blow for the restoration of a pure and primitive state of society? The same kind of blood ran in Hutten's veins as in Sickingen's, and there is no reason to suppose that he was anything but perfectly sincere in this apology. Nor was it difficult for Sickingen to persuade himself that he was working not only against the overweening power of the princes, but for the consolidation of Imperial rule, although indeed such armed organisations, as that of which he was the head, were fatal to all settled government. He hardly rose to the dignity of a revolutionary element in German politics; for revolution implies some fixed outlook towards the future, and Sickingen and his allies were a survival of the past. Princes and cities alike were too strong for him. It was too late to prevent the territorial disintegration of the Empire. It was too late to treat Augsburg and Nürnberg as anachronisms of civilisation.

Sickingen and Hutten were well qualified to meet on equal terms of friendship. The former was the older by seven years, but his life had been spent in castles and camps, and Hutten, with his eager rhetoric, his quick satiric wit, his acquaintance with the new learning, soon became the intellectual force that guided the mailed hand. Probably Sickingen, in his rough martial way, was of the two the more susceptible of a purely religious impression; he seems afterwards to have conceived a real admiration of the Reformer, to whom he was at first willing to extend a somewhat careless protection. Hutten, on the contrary, always appears to desire Luther's alliance on the political side. The motives which swayed him were not of the religious order. Even when he substitutes the Biblical phrases of the new school for the classical allusions familiar to the humanists they sound unreal.

But of his passionate hatred of Rome, as the power that at once plundered, oppressed, and despised Germany, there can be no doubt. Here he was in fullest accord with Luther, whom he would gladly have carried with him more completely than was actually the case, in his methods of action. For nearly three years after his return from Italy, he is as it were groping after a vocation. He writes satirical dialogues in the manner of Lucian. He exhorts the German princes to unite in war against the Turks. He is the busy political agent of Albert of Mainz. Presently, in April 1520, he publishes two dialogues, *Vadiscus, or the Roman Trinity*, and *Inspicientes, The Onlookers*, which may be taken as his formal declaration of war against Rome. Henceforth all his writings bear a gage of battle in the motto "Jacta est alea," or its German equivalent, "Ich hab's gewagt."

Vadiscus is a dialogue supposed to take place at Frankfurt between himself and his friend Ernhold. There is nothing dramatic in it; it is simply a bitter epigrammatic invective against Rome, in which accusation is heaped on accusation with a wonderful cumulative force. Whatever Hutten has to tell of Rome is cast into the form of a triad. Three things in Rome are without number—strumpets, priests, and scribes. Three things are banished from Rome—simplicity, moderation, and purity. Three things pilgrims are wont to bring back from Rome—unclean consciences, bad digestions, and empty purses. Three things Rome chiefly fears—that the princes should be agreed, that the people's eyes should be opened, and that its own deceit should come to light. Three things only will reform Rome—that the princes should be in earnest, the people impatient, and a Turkish army at the gates. And so he goes on, putting the same intense conviction of the moral corruption of Rome into an endless variety of triads, so arranged that one seems to arise inevitably out of the other in the natural course of conversation. *The Onlookers* is much more after the true Lucianic model. Sol stops his chariot over the city of Augsburg at the time of the Diet of 1518, and having drawn aside the intervening canopy of cloud, converses upon what he sees there with his son Phaethon, who has sown his wild oats, and is a kind of assistant whip

to his father. Perhaps it is the Germans who, in this dialogue, are made to feel the sharpest lash of satire; their drunken habits are stigmatised in the severest terms, and, with their general stupidity, are assigned as the reason why they suffer themselves to be robbed and trampled upon by the wily Italians. At the end of the dialogue Cardinal Cajetan is made to enter into colloquy with the celestial speakers, and, in virtue of the unbounded powers which he has received from the Pope, claims to be able to excommunicate the Sun himself.[1]

This, then, was the Germany in which through the year 1520 Luther became more and more a chief motive power. The year began and ended for him in controversy. Every month bears its own witness to the fact that his intellectual activity was strained to the highest point, and a less energetic, a less tough, a less buoyant nature than his must have broken down under the incessant pressure. When the year began he had been busy for some time with a series of "Postills," or exegetical comments on the Gospels and Epistles, a work which he had undertaken at the request of the Elector, who desired to withdraw him from the controversies which were taking up so much of his time and strength, to the quieter labours of his professorship. The task hardly had the desired effect, for 1520 was a year of perpetual struggle, but he persevered in its performance, and these Latin Postills, which were a prelude to a more important work of the same kind in German, were finally dedicated to the Elector, in a letter dated March 3d, 1521, and then given to the world. But however vehement was Luther's controversial spirit, and how little, in the opinion of some of his friends, under due regulation, it never diverted him from the work of building up the religious life of those who looked to him for guidance. Two or three little books, published at the beginning of 1520, one of them not much more than a broadsheet, expounded the Lord's Prayer, the Commandments, the Belief, for simple folk.[2] They were the foundation of the catechetical

[1] *Opp. Hutteni*, ed. Böcking, vol. iv. pp. 145-269. For Hutten and Sickingen I may refer in general to D. F. Strauss, *Ulrich von Hutten*, and to H. Ulmann, *Franz von Sickingen*.

[2] *Kurze Auslegung des heiligen Vater Unsers, vor sich und hinter sich*, Erl. D. S. vol. xlv. p. 208; Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 20; *Kurze Form der zehen Gebote, des Glaubens, und des Vater Unsers*, ibid. vol. xxii. p. 1; conf. *Opp. Ex.* vol. xii. p. 219.

works, by means of which Luther afterwards exercised so wide and deep an influence on the German people. To these must be counted the great *Sermon on Good Works*, on which he laboured during the first months of the year, and which he dedicated on the 29th of March to Duke John. It was more than an ordinary sermon; "it grew," he said, "in his hands into a not small volume," and became a treatise on a cardinal point of his doctrine—the relation of good works to faith. Like all his German works, it had a prompt and large popularity; eight editions appeared in 1520, five more before 1525, while the Latin translation also was not without its numerous readers.[1]

The suggestion which Luther had made in his *Sermon on the Sacrament*, that it would be well to restore the cup to the laity, had excited an opposition quite out of proportion to the intrinsic importance of the subject. But it was characteristic of the Bohemian Church to administer the Communion in both kinds, and popular prejudice always eagerly fastens upon a visible sign of heresy. It might be difficult to draw the line between orthodoxy and heterodoxy in the matter of indulgences; but to give the cup to a layman, was a proof of radical unsoundness which no one could mistake. In the last days of December 1519, Duke George wrote to his kinsman, the Elector Frederick, a very strong letter, in which he said that a book of Dr. Martin Luther's had fallen into his hands of which the doctrine was "almost Pragish." The word "Bohemian" was repeated again and again; he identified Luther with the heretics whom Germany most feared and hated; he called upon his cousin, as "the oldest and most Christian Elector," to stay a plague which threatened the dominions of both of them alike. Frederick replied in his usual calm, cautious way; "he does not undertake to defend Luther, as he has already made clear to Cardinal Cajetan, and to Miltitz; but he hears that his doctrine is held to be Christian by many learned and understanding men, and he knows that he is ready to submit his case for trial to commissioners appointed by the Pope." Indeed the accusation of Bohemianism, first started by Eck at the Leipzig

[1] (*Postille*) De Wette, vol. i. pp. 366, 376, 378, 405, 453, 563; (*Sermon of Good Works*), *ibid.* vol. i. pp. 434, 447; Erl. ed. D. S. vol. xvi. p. 118 *seq.*; Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 196 *seq.*

disputation, seems by this time to have spread far and wide. The story ran that Luther had been born in Bohemia, brought up in Prag, and instructed in Wiclif's books; an accusation of Hussite heresy was even manufactured out of the engraved title-page, which, without his knowledge or sanction, the printer had prefixed to his sermon. It is curious to note how Luther thinks it necessary to deny all this, not only in a letter to Spalatin, but in an *Explanation of some Articles in his Sermon on the Holy Sacrament*—a tract, in German, which he published about the middle of January. But it is very characteristic of him that he will not yield to common orthodox prejudice in the matter of the Bohemians. In so far as the communion in both kinds is concerned he declares that they may be schismatics, but certainly are not heretics. And all that he himself has said is that a change back to the ancient practice might well be made by a lawfully constituted council of the Church.[1]

But the matter was not allowed to rest here. The Bishop of Meissen issued a mandate on the 24th of January, dated from Stolpe, and sealed with the official seal, in which he inhibited Luther's sermon, and declared its doctrine to be contrary to that laid down by councils of the Church. Luther, justly irritated by this unmistakable attempt to brand him as a heretic, quickly replied in an "Answer to the Placard,"[2] which has been issued under the seal of the official at Stolpe. He chose to believe that such a document, so unguarded, so calumnious, so malicious, could not have been published with the knowledge and consent of the Bishop, and accordingly assumed a bearing towards its supposed author which would not have been respectful to a Father of the Church. He pointed out with unanswerable logic that his only offence had been to desire that a change might be introduced on the authority of a council, and vehemently denied the heresy imputed to him of believing that the Body and Blood of Christ were not to be partaken of under either species. But the contention was waxing somewhat warm, and Frederick, or Spalatin for him, became alarmed. How moderate this im-

[1] Löscher, vol. iii. p. 920 *seq.*; De Wette, vol. i. p. 390. Erl. D. S. vol. xxvii. p. 70 *seq.*; Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 76 *seq.*

[2] Erl. D. S. vol. xxvii. p. 77 *seq.*; Latin, *Opp.* v. a. vol. iv. p. 136; Weimar ed. vol. vi. pp. 135 *seq.*, 142 *seq.*

petuous theologian, who seemed bent upon making the line of policy which the Elector was still willing to pursue impossible? Luther's letters make it plain that he was assailed by frequent remonstrances from Spalatin on what the latter thinks his violence and contentiousness; while the chaplain is especially shocked that he should so unsparingly criticise an episcopal mandate. In some respects, Luther is not unwilling to excuse himself: "I am certainly," he says to his friend,[1] "of a quick hand and a ready memory, so that what I write rather flows from me than is deliberately put forth. Even so, I am not sufficient for the occasion; what happens to others who are slower, I wonder." Again, a little later:[2] "I cannot deny that I am somewhat more vehement than I ought to be; and as my opponents know it they should not provoke the dog. How difficult it is to temper heat and pen you may learn even from your own case. This is the reason why I am always vexed to be involved in public affairs; and the more I am vexed the more I am involved against my will. And that not without the cruellest accusations, directed against myself and the Word of God: whereby it happens, that if I were carried away neither by heat nor by pen, even a stony mind might be moved to arms by the very indignity of the thing—and how much more I who am hot and have a pen that is not altogether blunt? By these monsters I am borne beyond the decorum of modesty. And at the same time I wonder whence that new religion has arisen, according to which whatever is said against an adversary is called an insult. What do you think of Christ? Was He an utterer of insults when He called the Jews an adulterous and perverse generation, the offspring of vipers, hypocrites, children of the devil? And then Paul?" "I beseech you," he says in the same letter,[3] "if you think rightly of the Gospel, not to suppose that it can be promoted without tumult, scandal, sedition. You will not make a pen out of a sword, or peace out of war; the word of God is a sword, is war, is ruin, is scandal, is perdition, is poison; and, as Amos says, it meets the sons of Ephraim like a bear in the way and a lioness in the wood. I wrote much more vehemently against Emser,

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 405. [2] *Ibid.* p. 418. [3] *Ibid.* p. 417.

Eck, Tetzel, and you did not complain." Other passages of the same kind might be quoted; but though Luther felt the danger of an ungoverned pen, he was not disposed to yield an inch to remonstrance. "I have delivered and offered myself in the name of the Lord: His will be done. Who asked Him to make me a Doctor? If He has made me one, let Him have me for Himself, or again destroy me, if He repents having created me. . . . This alone I care for, that the Lord may be propitious to me in those causes of mine which are between me and Himself." [1]

Nevertheless Luther, probably at Spalatin's instigation, made another attempt to conciliate his ecclesiastical superiors. On the 4th of February he wrote two letters, one to the Archbishop of Mainz, the other to the Bishop of Merseburg, the prelate who had attempted to prevent the disputation at Leipzig. They were couched in respectful, but at the same time manly terms, asking that his books might be read and fairly judged, and professing his readiness to be instructed. Probably the most remarkable thing about the correspondence is the courteous moderation of the answers which he received; both prelates, indeed, gently reprove him for the vehemence of his way of writing on difficult and disputed matters, but neither ventures to condemn him as a stiff-necked heretic. Perhaps they were waiting for the decision which they knew that Rome was preparing to take; but meanwhile it is easy to read between the lines that the Augustinian monk is now a power in the land, in treating with whom at least a show of courtesy is to be preserved. But in truth the conflict was deepening day by day. In the Preface to the first edition of his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians*, published in September 1519, Luther had given strong expression to the resentment against Rome, which the proceedings of the Diet of Augsburg, and we may suppose the catalogue of grievances presented by the Bishop of Liège, had awakened in his mind. He did indeed draw a distinction, which was at this time a very real one to him, between the Roman Church and the Roman Curia, the first of which it is not lawful to oppose, while the second ought to be more stoutly resisted by all kings

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 391.

and princes than the Turks themselves; but Hutten himself, in his bitterest mood of patriotism, never said anything stronger of the contempt in which the German nation was held by the Italian ecclesiastics who deceived and plundered it. Now, just before the 24th of February, he first saw Hutten's republication of Laurentius Valla's book on the *Donation of Constantine*. Its exposure of the legendary basis on which the temporal power of the Pope rested made a great impression upon his mind. He is all but convinced by it that the Pope is that veritable Antichrist whom the world expects; everything in his life, sayings, doings, decrees, answers to that supposition. It is like a revelation to him, that the power which is exercised with such utter disregard of righteousness should be founded on a lie. Every day some scruple is lightened or removed, and he becomes a rebel with a quieter conscience.[1]

Sometime in the spring or early summer of this year—the precise date is not easy to fix—Valentine von Teutleben, a Saxon nobleman at Rome, who was also a canon of Mainz, wrote to the Elector to tell him that on account of the protection which he extended to Luther he was ill looked upon by the Holy See. This, with a letter of similar import from the Cardinal of St. George, Frederick sent to Luther, with a request that he would advise as to the answer which should be given to them. He respectfully put the task aside; but in comparing the two letters which he wrote to Spalatin on the subject with the Elector's answer to Teutleben, it is easy to see that he inspired, if he did not actually write, the latter. It contains two passages which deserve careful notice. In the first Frederick declares that at one time he had arranged with Luther that he should of his own accord retire from Saxony and the University of Wittenberg, and that the retirement would actually have taken place but for the earnest intercession of Miltitz, who thought that elsewhere Luther, relieved from the authority of the Elector and the influence of his colleagues, would write and act still more freely than he had yet done. The date of this negotiation is not given; was it

[1] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 398, 401, *Ep. ad Gal.* vol. iii. p. 133; Weimar, 420; Walch, vol. xv. p. 1644; Erl. vol. ii. p. 447 *seq.*

upon Miltitz's first coming to Saxony, after Luther had returned from Augsburg, and about the publication of the *Acta Augustana*? The second remarkable passage in the Elector's letter is one in which he calls his correspondent's attention to the growing learning of Germany, both among divines and laymen, and the harm that will arise should men come to feel that Luther has been unfairly, and without due judgment of his case, condemned. "For the doctrine of Luther has already so rooted itself everywhere, both in Germany and elsewhere, in the minds of the majority of men, that if it be not refuted by true and solid arguments and clear witness of Scripture, and he be put down by the mere terror of the Church's power, the result cannot but be to excite in Germany the sharpest offence, and horrible and deadly tumults, whence no good can come either to our most holy lord, the Pope, or to any one else." The whole letter affords a clear indication of the Elector's policy. He is anxious to keep Luther within bounds of moderation. He will do nothing to hasten the day of decisive conflict. But he rightly estimates the force of public opinion at the Reformer's back, and he sees that it is futile to oppose blind force to reasonable conviction.[1]

Meanwhile adversaries multiplied. The theological faculty of the University of Louvain had early taken alarm at Froben's edition of Luther's works, and had sent it in August 1519 to their brethren of the University of Köln, to examine and report upon. The divines of Köln promptly condemned the book, ordering it to be publicly burned, a sentence in which, on the 7th of November, Louvain cordially concurred. The condemnation was then sent to the Cardinal of Tortosa, afterwards Pope Adrian VI, who at the moment was doing his best to administer the troubled affairs of Spain, for his old pupil Charles V. He fully approved the sentence, and ordered it to be published. A copy soon found its way to Wittenberg, which Luther, after his own daring fashion, reprinted with an answer, in which he repudiated in the strongest terms the pretensions of the two Universities to constitute themselves judges of theological orthodoxy.[2] Next, a Franciscan

[1] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 7; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 461, 463.

[2] Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 170 *seq.*; Erl. ed. *Opp.* v. a. vol. iv. p. 176.

monk, Augustine of Alfeld (usually called Alveld), entered the lists, with a work on the divine right of the Papacy. Luther's first intention was not to waste his time in answering an attack which he regarded with contempt, and he delegated the task to one of his pupils at Wittenberg, John Lonicerus. But presently, when Alveld republished his book in German, the controversial impulse got the better of him, and he issued in June a tract, *Of the Roman Papacy, against the highly renowned Romanists at Leipzig*,[1] which is to some extent notable as laying down that theory of the Church which was a fundamental principle of the Reformation. But about the same time an old adversary reappeared. Sylvester Prierias, dissatisfied, it may be presumed, with his former effort of that kind, had been preparing an elaborate book on the Papacy, in which he put forward the extreme Roman view of its unlimited dignity and privileges. Before publishing this, however, he issued what he called an *Epitoma* of it, a brief statement of the propositions which he intended to prove, arranged in their logical order. This, though dating from 1519, only reached Luther in the spring of 1520, and he republished it, at the same time as his answer to Alveld, with incisive notes and a brief introduction and epilogue. The large claims which Prierias made for the Papacy angered him in the highest degree; he thought that the book had been written with the express purpose of destroying the authority of Councils, and therefore of invalidating his own appeal. "If Rome thus believes and teaches,"[2] he breaks out, "with the knowledge of Popes and Cardinals (which I hope is not the case), then in these writings I freely declare that the true Antichrist is sitting in the temple of God, and is reigning in Rome, that enpurpled Babylon, and that the Roman Curia is the Synagogue of Satan." And again, "If Rome thus believes, blessed is Greece, blessed is Bohemia, blessed all who have separated themselves from her, and have gone out from the midst of that Babylon—but condemned, one and all, who have held communion with her."[3] But in his Epilogue he rises to a

[1] Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 277 *seq.*; Erl. D. S. vol. xxvii. p. 86 *seq.*

[2] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 79; Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 328.

[3] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 80; Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 329.

still higher pitch of indignation, and in words which stand almost, if not quite, alone among his utterances, he says,[1] "Indeed, it seems to me that if the fury of the Romanists thus goes on there will be no remedy left, except that emperor, kings, and princes, girt about with force and arms, should attack these pests of the world, and settle the matter, no longer by words, but by the sword. . . . If we strike thieves with the gallows, robbers with the sword, heretics with the fire, why do we not much more attack in arms these Masters of perdition, these Cardinals, these Popes, and all this sink of the Roman Sodom which has without end corrupted the Church of God, and wash our hands in their blood?" I do not think that these strong words ought to be taken metaphorically. Probably Luther only meant them for a moment. There are others, written in a calmer and more deliberate mood, and of diametrically opposite tendency, to be set against them. But they were the wild cry of a passion that undoubtedly moved him.[2]

This was a turning-point of the Reformation; a moment at which it was necessary to make a decisive choice between uncompromising resistance to Rome and some form of transaction with her. News came to Wittenberg that Eck was in Rome, moving heaven and earth to secure Luther's formal condemnation. On the other hand, behind the Reformer was an immense and growing mass of German opinion; the religious enthusiasm which the new movement had called out, the scorn of the younger humanists for mediæval learning and all that was connected with it, the indignation of the people against the vices of the clergy and the exactions of Rome, the revolt of

[1] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. ii. p. 107; Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 347.

[2] Löscher, vol. iii. p. 848; Tentzel, vol. ii. p. 157; Seckendorf, lib. i. sec. 27, § lxx. p. 106; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 445, 448, 449, 451, 453; *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. p. 201. Much has been made by Catholic critics of a sentence in a letter from Luther to Spalatin, dated November 13th (De Wette, vol. i. p. 523), "Gaudeo Huttenum prodiisse, atque utinam Marinum aut Aleandrum intercepisset." What this alludes to we do not know; possibly to some wild scheme of Hutten's for sweeping down on the Papal Legates, and carrying them off to the Ebernburg. That some such scheme was at least considered probable is plain from a passage in one of Aleander's despatches, in which he says that the Archbishop of Trier had warned him to be on his guard against Hutten as he travelled from Mainz to Worms (Brieger, *Aleander und Luther*, 1521, p. 19; Balan, *Monumenta Reformationis Lutheranae*, p. 25). But by the very simple expedient of translating "intercepisset" as if it were "interfecisset," it has been easy to represent Luther as an accomplice of assassination.

the patriots against an unworthy subservience to Italy—all coalesced into one threatening force. If we may judge by Spalatin's letters, the Elector was alarmed at the impetuosity of his theologian, but he never withdrew his protection from him, and the offers of Schaumburg and Sickingen gave him a confidence which he might not otherwise have felt. Unfortunately Luther's letters at this time to the patriots have perished; and room has been left for much misconstruction of his methods and motives. How far the reproach of sympathy with revolution can justly be attached to his name is a matter which can best be discussed a little later on; at this moment it was quite unmerited. Whatever were Hutten's and Sickingen's schemes afterwards, they were strictly constitutional just now. It is quite curious, almost touching, to see what hope every one connected with the party of reform places in the young Emperor. He is to redress all wrongs; he is to remedy all weakness; he will defend the lesser nobility against the encroachments of the princes; he will restore law and order to a distracted Empire; more than all, he will feel as a German should as to Italian pretensions, and will put himself at the head of his faithful people against Rome. Only little by little were those who entertained these expectations disenchanted; only little by little did they learn that the boy on whom their hearts were fixed was Catholic to the core, and surrounded by advisers whose sympathies were neither anti-Papal nor German. Still, it was through the House of Hapsburg, and in accord with the spirit of Imperial loyalty that Hutten and Sickingen resolved to work. In the autumn of 1519, Hutten, examining the ancient library of the Abbey of Fulda, found a dusty MS., without title-page or author's name, which showed by its contents that it belonged to the end of the eleventh century. It dealt with the circumstances and principles of the great struggle between Henry IV and Gregory VII, and though, as has since been ascertained, written by a German Bishop, Walram of Naumburg, decisively took the Imperial and national side. This document, under the title *De Unitate Ecclesiae Conservanda*, Hutten edited with a strong anti-Papal preface, and dedicated, as Charles had not yet arrived in Germany, to the Archduke Ferdinand. It was one more appeal to the national feeling, of which it was Hutten's desire

that the Hapsburg Princes should become the representatives. And in June he left Mainz to visit Ferdinand in the Netherlands, upon some vague hope of winning over the young prince, who stood next to the throne, to his side. The journey excited the utmost interest among Reformers: Melanchthon reported the fact in terms of exultant expectation: "what, therefore," he adds, "may we not hope?"[1]

The journey was a futile one. We are not acquainted either with Hutten's plans or the circumstances which frustrated them; whether he even saw Ferdinand is uncertain. He soon began to think that he was not safe at the Archduke's court, and turned his steps homeward. But it was only to find that he had lost his footing at Mainz. That he should have kept it so long is strange enough; the editor of Valla's book on the *Donation of Constantine*, the author of the *Trias Romana*, could hardly have been an acceptable servant of the Primate of Germany, especially when that Primate was one who was so little troubled by scruples as to ecclesiastical irregularities and corruptions. But in truth Albert of Mainz was perhaps half unconsciously playing a double game. He had a genuine sympathy with humanism. Erasmus was his friend as well as Hutten. Capito, who was closely connected with the humanist reforming circle, and who afterwards became the Reformer of Strassburg, was at this moment his counsellor and secretary. We have seen that he looked to the success of Francis I. in his candidature for the Empire to make him Papal Legate in Germany. Might he not expect, if Sickingen and Hutten were successful in revolt from Rome, to be the first head of a truly national Church, a Pope in his own country, owning no superior beyond the Alps? If these were his dreams, they were rudely dissipated; letters from Leo X called upon him, in terms which were not less imperative because veiled with courtesy, to choose between obedience to the Holy See and rebellion. First, he was offered the Golden Rose, an honour till then reserved for secular princes; secondly, he was told that the Pope had noted with astonishment the position which Hutten held at his court, and the fact that books containing the most atrocious attacks on

[1] *Corp. Ref.* vol. i. p. 201; *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. i. pp. 325-356; vol. iv. p. 689; Strauss, *U. v. H.* p. 322.

the Holy See had been printed at Mainz. A private letter from Valentine von Teutleben, a canon of Mainz, who was then at Rome, to his Archbishop, told the same story in still plainer words: the favour which the Elector showed to Hutten made him an object of suspicion to the Pope. Hutten declared to his friends that the Pope had ordered the Archbishop to seize him, and send him in chains to Rome; and it is certainly true that one of the five briefs which the Papal Nuncios, Caracciolo and Aleander, brought with them was directed against him by name. Under these circumstances, he thought it advisable to join Sickingen at the Ebernburg; and the Archbishop wrote a letter, full of submission, to the Pope, in which he reported that the printer of the obnoxious books was fast laid up in hold; while their author had betaken himself to his mountain fortress and the protection of his men-at-arms. Henceforth Hutten had done with courts, and from the safe eminence of his friend's castle he addressed one passionate appeal after another to the German people.[1]

Meanwhile Eck had not been idle. According to his own account he was summoned to Rome by the Pope; his enemies said that he had repaired thither to negotiate a fit reward for his dialectical triumph at Leipzig. When he arrived there, probably in February 1520, he was received in the most cordial way as a champion of the Holy See. He took with him the MS. of a work which he had written on the Primacy of Peter, and on the 1st of April presented it to the Pope. Nothing, if we may believe him, could be more gracious and friendly than the behaviour of Leo and his cardinals; the Pope publicly kissed him; he was constantly consulted on the Bull that was to be issued; on one memorable occasion, as he narrates with just pride, "His Holiness, two cardinals, a Spanish doctor, and I," privately deliberated for five hours on the subject. The Sacred College was far from being of one mind; the lawyers, in opposition to the theologians, still desired to summon Luther to Rome, and there put him on his defence; while a personal contest raged between Cardinal Peter Accolti—sometimes known as Anconitanus—and Laurentius

[1] *Opp. Hutteni*, ed. Böcking, vol. i. pp. 356, 357, 360, 363, 367, 368; De Wette, vol. i. p. 486.

Pucci as to who should prepare the important document. The draft of the former was in substance finally adopted; and after repeated consistories had been held, the Bull *Exsurge Domine* was issued on the 15th of June. This document, which like others of its class combined an unctuous religious phraseology with a quite legal diffuseness and repetition, stated the especial kindness with which the Holy See regarded the German nation, and vaunted the patience, the moderation, the fatherly long-suffering extended to Luther by the Pope. But it went on to condemn forty-one articles extracted from his works, and extending over a wide range of Christian doctrine. At the same time the selection of the incriminated opinions was not so made as to give any distinct or comprehensive view of the matters really in dispute between Luther and the Church. All books of Luther's, wherever found, are to be burned; Luther himself is prohibited from preaching. He and his adherents are required to recant within sixty days of the publication of the Bull in the dioceses of Brandenburg, Meissen, and Merseburg; and sixty days more are given for the news of their recantation to reach the Pope. Otherwise they are declared to be self-convicted of obstinate heresy, and given over to the punishment reserved for heretics: a sentence which takes a lurid light from the fact that the 33d of the condemned propositions is, "To burn heretics is contrary to the will of the Spirit." The author of the Bull affected a judicial style; but how little of the judicial character belonged to it may be inferred from the fact that Eck was invested with the office of Papal Prothonotary, with a view to the publication of the Bull in those parts of Germany where Luther's influence was greatest; and that he was authorised to insert in the document, at his own discretion, the names of not more than twenty-four persons who were to share the penalties inflicted on the arch-heretic himself. Eck declared afterwards that he had unwillingly undertaken the task of publishing the Bull; but if it were so, he soon overcame his reluctance, and showed no lack of energy in its performance.[1]

[1] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. iv. p. 256; Walch, vol. xv. p. 1658; Pallavicini, bk. i. ch. 20; Sarpi, *Istoria del Concilio Tridentino*, bk. i. ch. 12; Wiedemann, *Joh. Eck*, p. 150; Riederer, *Beytrag*, pp. 56-59; Enders, vol. ii. p. 412. The Bull itself, with Hutten's annotations, will be found in *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. v. p. 301.

A gossiping letter, written from Rome at the end of the year 1520 by we know not whom, and afterwards found among Pirckheimer's papers, gives a lively account of the state of opinion in the sacred city. There is nobody there, says the writer, who does not know that in most things Martin has spoken truly; but the good hide their opinions for fear of oppression, and the bad rage because they are compelled to hear the truth. There is much difference of opinion as to the policy of issuing the Bull; many good and prudent men are in favour of moderate measures; but indignation and fear have conquered. To debate with Luther, said the advocates of repression, was not consistent with the dignity of the Holy See; and the precedent was alleged of the seasonable punishment inflicted upon John Hus and Jerome of Prag. The two men who were most conspicuous on the side of severity were Cajetan and Prierias. The former, returning disappointed from Augsburg, declared that unless the Germans were put down with fire and sword they would altogether shake off the yoke of the Papacy; the latter went back to the precedent of Reuchlin: if he had been repressed Luther would never have dared so much. Finance, in the person of the Fuggers, was on the same side; it was they who had sent Eck to Rome, "a not unfit instrument of the Roman Curia if he had not been drunken, for in temerity, audacity, lying, dissimulation, adulation, and other vices well adapted to the Curia, he was a great proficient." Nor indeed did his inebriety much stand in his way; men said it was appropriate that a drunken legate should be sent to a drunken people. Aleander was a fit companion for him; the drunkenness of the one was balanced by the Jewish birth of the other. The talk of the predominant party ran high; everything was to be done to destroy Luther, who was a worse enemy than the Turk, and with him his doctrine; the approaching Diet at Worms would be occupied with little else. The Emperor was to be assailed by prayers and threats; the Germans were to be flattered and bribed; in Spain advantage was to be taken of the popular risings. But if these things do not prevail, "we will depose the Emperor," said the high-flying Papalists; "we will liberate the people from their allegiance; we will elect another Emperor, who shall be well pleasing to us, in his place;

we will stir up among the Germans a sedition such as now rages in Spain; we will call France, England, and all the kings of the earth to arms; we will omit nothing that our predecessors have been wont to do, not without fortunate issue, against emperors and kings." So far Pirckheimer's nameless correspondent, whose words, which have a certain verisimilitude of their own, may be taken for what they are worth.[1]

Eck, however, was not the only ambassador whom at this juncture the Pope despatched to Germany. It was necessary that the Holy See should be represented at the coronation of Charles at Aachen, and at the important Diet at which he was to meet the Estates of Germany for the first time. The political interests involved were entrusted by Leo to Martin Caracciolo, an Italian diplomatist of noble birth, who had already earned by his services the title of Apostolical Prothonotary, and who afterwards received a red hat from Paul III. With him was conjoined, for the express purpose of dealing with the Lutheran difficulty, a more remarkable man, Hieronymus Aleander. Born in 1480, at a little town in Istria, and, as his enemies said, of Jewish parents,[2] Aleander's first claim to distinction was made as a humanist. Invited by Lewis XII he had taught Greek with great acceptance in the University of Paris in 1508, and had filled the office of Rector. Thence he had passed into the service of Erhard, that Bishop of Liège whose schedule of grievances against Rome had been laid before the Diet of Augsburg. By him Aleander was sent to Rome to support his claims to a cardinal's hat, opposed, as he thought, by the King of France, and there remaining to push his own fortune, became, first, secretary to the Cardinal de Medici, and afterwards librarian of the Vatican. A certain pride which he took in being a native of the Empire, his familiarity with German men of letters, and his long experience of Papal business, marked him out as a fit person to negotiate not only with Charles, but with the electors and princes who were to gather around him. Eck was entrusted with the thunderbolts of the Church, Caracciolo and Aleander were to

[1] Riederer, *Nachrichten*, vol. i. p. 178.

[2] Aleander emphatically denied this aspersion. *Vide* Balan, *Monumenta Reformationis Lutheranae*, p. 58.

awaken against Luther the justice of the Empire. Nor were the latter less zealous in their function than the former.[1]

The news, which letters from Italy brought to Wittenberg, that these weapons were being forged against him, found Luther undismayed. To draw back was impossible even if he had desired it; but he never thought of retreat. At the beginning of June he writes to Spalatin:[2] "I have a mind to make a public appeal to Charles and the nobility of all Germany against the tyranny and worthlessness of the Roman Curia." This, which he dedicated on the 23d of the same month to his brother-in-arms, Nicholas von Amsdorf, was the famous address, "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, of the amending of the Christian State." Even in the dedication Luther strikes a strange note, as if he knew that he was taking a new departure, which was irrevocable. "The time of silence is past," he begins, "and the time to speak is come, as says Ecclesiastes." He has put together certain matters relative to the reform of the Christian state, to lay before the Christian nobility of the German nation; of amendment from the side of the priestly order, he has no present hope. Perhaps he thinks too highly of himself, that he, a despised monk, should address persons of such condition on a matter so important, "but I am perhaps debtor to my God and the world of a folly," and, like Paul, though he does not compare himself to the Apostle, would have his friends bear with him in his foolishness. "But as I am not only a fool, but also a sworn Doctor of Holy Scripture, I am glad that I have the opportunity of being faithful to my oath, even in this foolish fashion." He was about to make the great venture of his life, and this is the way in which he lets his irony play for a moment with the deep seriousness of his purpose.[3]

For the book was an indictment of the whole Papal system, expressed in the most trenchant terms, and laid before the princes and nobles of Germany, who groaned, or ought to groan under its oppressions. The opportunity was at the door; "God has given us a noble young blood for our head;" it

[1] Pallavicini, bk. i. ch. 23.
[2] De Wette, vol. i. p. 453.
[3] Erl. D. S. vol. xxi. p. 277 *seq.*; Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 381 *seq.*; De W. vol. i. p. 457.

needed but a resolute determination to shake off the yoke, and a free Council would do the rest. In accordance with the fact that the book is addressed to the laity, Luther lays down no elaborate foundation of theological principle. He enumerates what he calls three walls of defence which the Roman Curia has built up; three principles, that is, which are assumed to be beyond controversy. First, that the spiritual power is above the temporal; second, that no one, save the Pope alone, can interpret Scripture; third, that only the Pope can lawfully summon a Council. These he briefly demolishes, chiefly by the establishment in their place of the doctrine of the universal priesthood of believers, and then proceeds at great length to enumerate articles of practical reform, to which the future free Council is to direct its attention. What these were will be stated on another occasion: it is enough now to say that every one of them made more or less appeal to the religious instincts, the good sense, the personal interests, or the patriotic feeling of those to whom he was writing. He covers the whole ground of civil as well as of ecclesiastical reform; and spares the nobles to whom he appeals as little as the churchmen whose corruptions are the subject of his invective. As we read this fiery address, of which the earnestness never flags, and which indicates from the first page to the last the most masterly grasp of the subject, it is impossible not to admire its splendid moral audacity, its depth of patriotic feeling. If Leo had up to this time under-estimated his humble and distant antagonist, he could do so no longer. Here was a fire that, if it kindled and spread, would burn up the Papal system in Germany like so much stubble.[1]

And it seemed as if the fire were kindling. Four thousand copies of the Address were sold in a few days; Lange called it a trumpet of war; Staupitz wrote, though happily too late, to

[1] Luther speaks of a certain "Cortisanus Dr. Viccius," from whom he derived much of the material for this Address. This was John De Wick, or Van der Wieck, who had acted as procurator for Reuchlin at Rome in his litigation with Hoogstraten, who afterwards took the Protestant side, was active in the Reformation of Bremen, and finally, in 1533, was put to death by the Canons of Münster. De W. vol. i. p. 465; Lauterbach, p. 19; *Coll.* vol. ii. p. 160; *T. T.* vol. i. p. 259; Böcking, *Epp. Obs. Vir.* vol. i. p. 263; vol. ii. p. 502. [See further the Weimar editors' preface to their edition of the Address, vol. vi. p. 391 *seq.*]

prevent its publication; Luther, with the modesty which sometimes accompanies what looks to the world like excess of self-confidence, said, "Perhaps I am the precursor of Philip, whose way, after the manner of Elias, I am preparing." A *Sermon on the Mass* followed at the beginning of August;[1] then a little later a letter to the Emperor, which was doubtless written in compliance with the wish of the Elector. It was a respectful, but at the same time a manly appeal to Imperial justice. He had been dragged into controversy, he said. "Witness my own conscience, and the judgment of the best men, I have endeavoured to publish only evangelical truths against the superstitious opinions of human tradition, for which cause, now for almost three years, I have suffered endless anger, contumely, danger, and whatever of evil my adversaries can devise. In vain I ask for pardon, in vain I offer silence, in vain I propose conditions of peace, in vain I ask to be better instructed; the one thing that is being prepared against me is, that I, and with me the whole Gospel should be extinguished." Under these circumstances he appeals to Charles, as did Athanasius to Roman emperors of old. He does not wish to be protected, if he be found impious or a heretic. Whether his doctrine be true or false, let it not be condemned unheard. But the appeal of strong conviction, asking opportunity to vindicate itself, was never addressed to deafer ears.[2]

This was the moment at which a final attempt was made to influence Luther in the direction of submission, partly from the side of his order, partly by Miltitz. A chapter of Augustinian monks had been held at Venice in June 1519, at which Gabriel Venetus had been elected General. Staupitz was expected to be present, to consult with his brethren as to Luther and the reproach which he was bringing on the Augustinian order, but he did not come. On the 15th of March 1520, therefore, Venetus wrote to Staupitz begging him to use his great personal interest with his former pupil and friend:[3] "Wherefore we implore you, by your piety and religion and love to God, that if indeed zeal, honour, the advantage of reli-

[1] Weimar ed. vol. vi. p. 351; Erl. D. S. vol. xxvii. p. 141.

[2] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 393, 478, 479.

[3] *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. ii. p. 480; Kolde, *Staupitz*, p. 325.

gion and your own Congregation, are things that lie near your heart, to apply all your care, your effort, and your mind to bring Master Martin back to himself, and, with him, to save our order from so great and so wretched a reproach." Such a request from such a quarter threw Staupitz into the greatest perplexity. He loved Luther; he felt a profound sympathy with the religious side of his action; he would willingly have brought him back to ways of moderation. But he knew that his remonstrances would be fruitless. A responsibility was cast upon him which he felt that he could not sustain. Perhaps his request that the Address to the German nobility might not be published was the outcome of this mood, and its ill success showed him how untenable his position was. When then, on St. Augustine's Day, the Chapter of the Congregation was held at Eisleben, Staupitz laid down his office. It is a curious sign of the spirit that pervaded the province, that it was conferred on Wenceslaus Link, Luther's early and constant friend, who was already committed to his theology, and who stood by his side when the day of decisive revolt came.[1]

Now once more, and for the last time, Miltitz thought that he saw his opportunity. He had been flitting about Saxony, talking and writing to people in authority, and making himself pleasant in his convivial way, though not able to effect anything with the steadfast Elector or his resolute theologian. But he persuaded the Augustinians at Eisleben to send Staupitz and Link as a deputation to Luther, to ask him to write a letter to the Pope stating that he had never intended to attack him personally. They came to Wittenberg in the early days of September, and found Luther willing enough to make the small concession which they asked. "What can I write," he says to Spalatin, "more easily and more truly?" But the interview, of which we have no record, is deeply interesting, as being the last occasion on which Luther and Staupitz met. The older man retired to his new preferment at Salzburg, seeking in the Benedictine the peace which the Augustinian order denied him: the younger remained in the forefront of a struggle which grew hotter every day. The one must have been saddened by a sense of disappointment with a state of

[1] Kolde, *Staupitz*, p. 327.

things which he could no longer do anything to mould and rule: the other was still full of confidence in the forces of a newer time. But they loved one another still, and the recollection of the past was strong within them both. It is well to think that such a friendship could not be broken by any stress of adverse circumstances, and that the last words exchanged between Luther and Staupitz were words of sincerest affection.[1]

The letter to the Pope, however, was not written just yet; nor, when actually sent, was it in the form which Miltitz expected. On the 3d of October Luther tells Spalatin[2] that he shall postpone it to some indefinite period, as he hears that Eck is already in Leipzig with the Bull. Whatever schemes of conciliation Miltitz might still cherish, Eck had no wish for the cessation of a war on which his own present notoriety and his chance of future preferment alike depended. In virtue of the plenary powers confided to him, he had inserted in the Bull six names in addition to Luther's, in the selection of which even his Catholic apologist is forced to admit that he was influenced by personal vindictiveness. Carlstadt paid the penalty of the Leipzig disputation; Bernard Adelmann of the *Canonici Indocti;* Pirckheimer of the *Eccius Dedolatus.* The other three were undoubted adherents of Luther's: Lazarus Spengler, the author of the *Schützrede;* Sylvius Egranus, parish priest of Zwickau; and John Dolzig of Feldkirchen, a professor of theology at Wittenberg. The Bull, thus enlarged in its scope, was duly published at Meissen on the 21st, at Merseburg on the 25th, and at Brandenburg on the 29th of September. The formalities required for Luther's condemnation were now complete.[3]

Eck's mission, however, was not regarded by the bishops and universities of Germany with very favourable eyes. It was an innovation upon ecclesiastical usage that a theologian whose reputation did not stand high, and whose vanity and prejudices were notoriously involved in the controversy, should be sent on a roving commission from diocese to diocese to insist upon the execution of the Papal decree. He found bishops inclined

[1] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 483, 486; Seidemann, *K. v. Miltitz*, p. 25; Kolde, *Staupitz*, p. 446.

[2] De Wette, vol. i. p. 491.

[3] Wiedemann, *J. Eck*, p. 170; Riederer, *Beytrag*, p. 8.

to make difficulties, to fall back upon precedents, to think more of their own independence than of the danger to the faith. Everywhere in the universities Luther had many adherents, especially among the young, who made light of Papal threats, and mocked at the pompous disputant who was their bearer. It is not necessary to tell in detail the story of Eck's reception in every city, an example or two may suffice. On the 29th of September he was in Leipzig, the scene of his recent triumph, where, if anywhere, he might have expected a cordial welcome. He entered the city with a ducal escort; and Duke George wrote to the Council requesting them to present him with a gilt goblet full of silver coin. But it was Fair time; a considerable number of students, not disinclined to mischief, had come over from Wittenberg, and Eck, who was no hero, was soon in terror for his life. Miltitz, who happened to be in Leipzig, asked him to dinner, and having filled him with wine and drawn from him his vainglorious intentions, artfully played upon his fears. Satirical placards were posted up and down the city; songs were made upon the Papal Prothonotary, and sung in the streets. He took refuge, somewhat ignominiously, in the Dominican convent, appealing for protection to Cæsar Pflug, the Duke's minister, who intervened in his behalf, without much effect, with the Rector of the University. The students had by this time fully entered into the spirit of the game. Daily letters of feud were thrown into the precincts of the monastery, a persecution which at last so terrified Eck that he left Leipzig by night, and betook himself to Freiburg. Nor was the official reception of the Bull by the University much more favourable. It raised difficulties and appealed to Duke George for advice. Even he refused to accept Eck's copy of the Bull as necessarily genuine: he wanted to know why the original, or at least a copy formally accredited by notary and witnesses, had not been produced, and ended by advising delay. It was only after some months that these difficulties were removed, and the Bull finally accepted by the University. Luther's books were burned at Merseburg on the 23d of January, and at Leipzig a few days afterwards.[1]

[1] Seidemann, *Beiträge*, p. 38 *seq.*; p. 26; Wiedemann, *J. Eck*, p. 153 *seq.*; *Erläuterungen*, p. 5 *seq.*; *K. von Miltitz*, De Wette, vol. i. p. 492.

It was in the last days of September that Luther first vaguely heard that the Bull had been promulgated in Saxony. Day by day the news became more definite; then came intelligence of Eck's ill success at Leipzig. This was the moment which the Reformer chose for delivering his second great blow —the book, *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church.* It was an elaborate and resolute attack upon the sacramental system of Rome; less vehement in style, as became a scientific theological treatise, than the *Address to the German Nobility*, but, for those who could discern the wide sweep and necessary issues of the principles laid down, not less trenchant. "I hear,"[1] says Luther in its last paragraph, "that Bulls and Papal threats have been again made ready against me, in which I am urged to recant on pain of being declared a heretic. If these things are so, I desire this book to be a part of my future recantation." This deliberate defiance of the Pope, for it was no less, was issued at first in Latin, in the shape of a letter to Hermann Tulich, one of the Wittenberg professors, but almost immediately translated into German. Then on the 11th of October Luther reports to Spalatin that the Bull itself has arrived in Wittenberg. Eck had sent it to Peter Burkhardt, the Rector of the University, with a request that it might be at once put in force, and a threat that in case of refusal the Pope would withdraw from the University all the privileges which his predecessors had granted. Luther's mood on hearing the news is one of scorn; he is far freer than he was before, he says, being at last certain that the Pope is Antichrist, and that the seat of Satan is plainly manifest. To us it seems strange that in this extremity his thought should turn to the boy Emperor: "Oh, that Charles were a man, and in Christ's cause would attack these Satans." But the exclamation is uttered rather in despair than in hope. "Erasmus writes," he goes on, "that the Emperor's court is beset with the mendicant tyrants, and that no hope can be placed in Charles. Nor is it wonderful. 'Trust not in princes, neither in the children of men, in whom is no help.'"[2]

The Elector was at this moment in Köln. He had got so

[1] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 118; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 573.

[2] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 488, 489, 493, 494, 495; Walch, vol. xv. p. 1874.

far on his way to Aachen, to be present at the coronation of the Emperor, when gout overtook him and prevented his further journey. Here there came to him a letter from Burkhardt asking what the University was to do, and no doubt hinting its unwillingness to take any steps against its most distinguished member. But Frederick had his own battle to fight. As soon as the coronation was over, Caracciolo and Aleander had sought a formal interview with him; had delivered to him the Papal briefs of which they were the bearers; and had demanded of him, first, that he would cause Luther's books to be burned in his dominions, and next that he would arrest the culprit, and either subject him to condign punishment, or send him to Rome for that purpose. The tone of the Papal messengers, probably raised by what they knew of the Emperor's Catholic sympathies, was high and confident. Emperor and princes, they said, were agreed on this matter; Frederick alone stood out. But indeed the very existence of the Empire depended upon its obedience to Rome; Greece had fallen away from the faith, and the Pope had transferred the Empire to the Germans; and it was hinted, not darkly, that what the Holy See had once done it could do again. The private talk of the Italian diplomatists was, if we may trust Erasmus, nothing less than insolent. "The Pope," said one of them, "who has put down so many dukes, so many counts, will easily put down three lousy grammarians." Again, "The Pope can say to the Emperor, 'Thou art a day labourer.'" Then the other, with such a look as a schoolmaster gives a boy before he whips him, "We shall find a way with your Duke Frederick." It is not wonderful that Erasmus, with his keen eye for facts, and his cautious and moderating spirit, thought this an ill-judged method of forwarding the interests of the Holy See.[1]

The Elector's answer to the Nuncios, delivered to them a few days after, was such as might have been expected of him. He declared his attachment, and that of his brother, to the Holy See; he denied that he had, or had ever had, anything in common with the cause of Luther, and that if the latter had written or spoken wrongly against the Pope, or otherwise than became a Christian and a theologian, it was displeasing to him.

[1] Von der Hardt, *Hist. Lit. Reform.* pt. i. p. 169.

exalt you, but only those who humble you. For this is the judgment of God, 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and exalted them of low degree.'" If Giovanni de Medici, the head of a house which had long come to consider itself princely, and the occupant of the Fisherman's chair, when it claimed to be the highest of earthly thrones, read this bold apostrophe, addressed to him by "a peasant and a peasant's son," he must have thought him mad with conceit and vanity. He was incapable of being touched by the moral nobleness of the appeal, and so audacious a contempt of merely social distinctions the world has rarely seen.[1]

The letter ends thus:[2] "Last of all, that I may not come empty handed to your Blessedness, I bring with me this little tractate, put forth under the protection of your name, as an omen of peace to be concluded, and of good hope; wherein you may discern in what studies I might be able, and should wish to be more fruitfully occupied, if it were permitted, or had hitherto been permitted, to me by your flatterers. It is but a little thing if you look at its bulk, but, if I mistake not, the sum of the Christian life, compendiously put together, if you grasp its meaning. Nor have I, being a poor man, anything else to give you, nor do you need anything save to be enriched with a spiritual gift." This was the treatise *Of the Freedom of a Christian Man*, the last of the three great books which Luther produced in this eventful year. In size it was the least, in contents perhaps the noblest, being occupied less with matters of controversy, however vital, than with the principles of spiritual religion. Its tone is singularly calm and dignified, as if the felt possession of the truth of God levelled all inequalities between the peasant's son who wrote it and the Pontiff to whom it was addressed; and the abundance of its quotations from Scripture testifies to the source from which flowed its serene self-confidence. It never descends to those depths of polemical objurgation in which Luther often wasted so much of his strength; as it deals in the simplest and most straightforward way with the inner mysteries of the Christian life, we seem to catch an echo of the *Deutsche Theologia* and the pure

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 504. [2] *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 505.

religious mysticism of a past age. To Leo the little treatise undoubtedly went in its Latin form, but it was at once published in German, somewhat abbreviated, and dedicated to Hieronymus Muhlpfort, the Burgomaster of Zwickau. Like all Luther's works, it ran rapidly through many editions.[1]

Meanwhile Eck was busy, though with various fortune. The South German bishops, when asked to publish the Bull, made difficulties and interposed delays. The Bishop of Freising, who was also administrator of Naumburg, issued letters to a number of his brother prelates, asking for their advice in this matter; some announced their intention of appealing to their several metropolitans; all expressed doubt of the genuineness of the Bull. Even Eck's own diocesan, the Bishop of Eichstädt, although he issued a mandate in favour of the Bull to the University of Ingolstadt (which was obeyed not without resistance), put off its publication in his own diocese. The Bishop of Augsburg received the Bull only after Eck had made a second demand upon him to that effect. The Bishop of Bamberg at first resolutely refused to publish the Bull; whether he afterwards consented to do so I do not know. At Erfurt the University took a similar course; the Senate declared that the Bull, which Eck had transmitted to it in a letter, had not been regularly notified. Then Eck came to Erfurt himself—but only to find a rough reception. The students took the copies of the Bull that were on sale in the booksellers' shops, tore them in pieces, and threw them into the river, with the words, "Bulla est, in aquâ natet" ("It is a bubble, let it swim"). Complaints to the University authorities were made in vain; they were of one mind with the rioters. At Torgau and at Leipzig the copies of the Bull publicly displayed were covered with filth; at Doebeln, the insulting words were added: "The nest is here, the birds are flown." Duke Henry at Freiberg, Duke George's brother, would have nothing to say to it; at Magdeburg it was affixed to the pillory. On the other hand, wherever Imperial influence prevailed, its injunctions were carried out. The burning

[1] (Latin) Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. iv. p. 219 *seq.*; (German) *Ibid.* D. S. vol. xxvii. p. 173.

of Luther's books[1] began in Charles's hereditary dominions at Louvain; Köln followed the example. At Mainz, where Aleander himself presided over the ceremony, there was almost a riot. The executioner, standing on the scaffold, asked the people whether he, whose books were to be burned, had been lawfully condemned. There was a universal shout of answer that he had not been condemned at all, whereupon the official leaped down, declaring that he would have nothing more to do with it, and Aleander with difficulty escaped the shower of stones which was poured upon him.[2]

It is not difficult to understand the pitch of righteous wrath, not unmingled with exasperation, to which Luther was roused by the proceedings of Eck and his abettors. "I rejoice," he writes to Spalatin, "that you at last see that the hopes of the Germans are vain, that you may learn not to put your trust in princes, and may cease to hang upon the judgment of men, who either praise or condemn what I do. If the Gospel had been such that it could have been either propagated or preserved by the Potentates of the world, God would not have entrusted it to fishermen." "It is a difficult thing," he says in the same letter, "to differ from all prelates and princes, but there is no other way left of avoiding hell and the Divine anger." He

[1] Hutten wrote a poem in Latin verse, and another in German, on the burning of Luther's books at Mainz. These, with some other satirical literature on the same subject, will be found in *Opp. Hutteni*, ed. Böcking, vol. iii. p. 450 *et seq.* Much is made in them of Aleander's alleged Jewish birth, and he is brought into unsavoury comparison with Pfefferkorn.

[2] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 519, 522, 527, 542, 569, 570; Druffel, *Die Aufnahme der Bulle "Exsurge Domine" von seiten einiger Süddeutschen Bischöfe* (Sitzungsberichte der Acad. der Wissenschaften zu München, 1880 (Historische Klasse), p. 571 *seq.*); Riederer, *Nachrichten*, vol. i. p. 327; Kraft, *Briefe u. Documente*, p. 23; *Opp. Hutteni*, ed. Böcking. vol. i. pp. 366, 427, 436.

In *Opp. Hutteni*, ed. Böcking, vol. v. p. 335, will be found a document, entitled *Intimatio Erphurdiana pro Martino Luther*, which is accepted as genuine by Kampschulte (vol. ii. p. 39), by Kahnis (*Die Deutsche Reformation*, p. 317), by Gieseler (vol. iii. pt. i. p. 85), and which Böcking prints without expressing any suspicion. It was printed, though without indication of date or place, by Schoeffer of Mainz, being sent to Hutten, it is supposed for that purpose, by Crotus. It purports to be an appeal from the Rector, Masters, Bachelors, Theological Professors, all and singly, of the University of Erfurt to all its members, announcing the arrival of the Bull, and imploring them to resist it by every means in their power. "Exhortamur in Domino Jesu Christo, consurgite, agite animosius in verbo Christi, defendendo, pugiles resistite, reclamate, immo manibus pedibusque rabidissimis illius Martini praedicti obtrectatoribus—repugnate." But this is not exactly the style of a University document, nor is it likely that the authorities of an old and famous place of learning would describe the

thinks, as was his wont at any sharp crisis of his life, that the last day is at hand. He is quite sure that the reign of Antichrist has begun. It is impossible, he declares, for any to be saved who have either approved, or have not repudiated this Bull. His own course is clear; he will appeal to the people. "I will not write privately to the princes, but I will renew my appeal in a public placard, asking for the adhesion of all Germans, great and small, and exposing the indignity of the thing." A series of controversial pamphlets came rapidly from his pen. The first, entitled *Of the new Eckian Bulls and Lies*, in which he took the ground that the Bull was a machination of his enemies for which the Pope was not responsible, is also remarkable as containing an outspoken defence of John Hus. At the time of the Leipzig disputation, he said, he had not read Hus's works, but the case was different now, and he at once put himself on the side of the murdered heresiarch, and condemned the treachery of the Fathers of the Council in the strongest terms. In the last four hundred years no book had been written like Hus's noble treatise on the Church. Not Hus's doctrines alone but those of Christ, Paul, Augustine, had been condemned at Constanz. For such articles would that he were worthy to be exiled, burned, torn in pieces! In a second pamphlet, *Against the Bull of Antichrist*, which appeared first in Latin, then in an extended German version, he examined, though in a brief and cursory fashion, some of the accusations made against him in the Bull, which he now accepts as a genuine document. Then on the 17th of November he formally removed his appeal from Leo X, whom he qualifies as an unjust judge, an obstinate heretic and schismatic, and an enemy and oppressor of Holy Scripture, to a free Christian Council.[1]

But what was the result of all this at Wittenberg? The

Bull as "tyrannica illa et plus quam diabolica excommunicatio papistica." Suspicion is still further excited by the recollection that, if in 1520 the "Poets" were supreme in Erfurt, many representatives of the older learning—among them Usingen—were still living and teaching. The fact of a contemporary edition of the *Intimatio* is not to be disputed, but may it not have been an academical joke, such as the Erfurt humanists delighted in? The Latinity is certainly not that of men who aimed at classical purity of language. The document is not mentioned by Luther, or alluded to by any contemporary writer. On the whole I am inclined to agree with Köstlin (*M.L.* vol. i. p. 797) in not taking it seriously.

[1] Erl. D. S. vol. xxiv. pp. 17 *seq.*, 31 *seq.*, 38 *seq.*; *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. pp. 119 *seq.*, 132 *seq.*; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 576 *seq.*; *Ibid.* p. 595 *seq.*; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 521, 522.

Elector was not without his fears for his University, which, if not with his express sanction, yet certainly with his tacit consent, had assumed the attitude of revolt against Rome. Some students left it; timorous friends thought that more would follow. A canon of Breslau set the example; the Bishop of Würzburg, Duke George, the city of Halberstadt were recalling their young men: the last might be reckoned at one hundred and fifty. But Spalatin soon sent a report which relieved his master's anxieties. Dr. Martin was joyful and of good courage: he was writing an exposition of the *Magnificat*, which he intended to dedicate to the young prince John Frederick; he thought that what cowardice had been shown sprang from the timidity of a few priests. At Luther's house Spalatin had seen thirty letters of comfort and encouragement from princes and distinguished men; from Swabia and Pomerania, from Switzerland and Bohemia. Melanchthon's and Luther's lecture-rooms were crowded; both the Augustinian convent and the parish church were too small to contain the crowds that came to hear the latter preach. Wittenberg was full of industrious students, and new ones came every day. But the strangest paragraph in these letters—one which throws a new light on the relations between Luther and the Elector—is that in which Spalatin announces to his master that the former intends to burn the Bull publicly, as soon as he hears that his own books have been burned at Leipzig. Possibly, if all Spalatin's voluminous correspondence were brought out of the obscurity of manuscript into the daylight of print and annotation, we might find that the Elector's attitude to the Roman See was one of assumed diplomatic caution, and that this was not the only instance in which he was forewarned of bold strokes of policy which he did not interfere to prevent.[1]

This intention of burning the Bull had been long taking shape in Luther's mind. As far back as the 10th of July he had written:[2] "As for me, the die is cast: I despise alike the favour and the fury of Rome; I do not wish to be reconciled to her, or ever to hold any communication with her; let her condemn and burn my books: I, in my turn, unless I can

[1] Seckendorf, lib. i. sec. 28, § lxxiii. p. 114; *Zeitschrift für K. G.* vol. ii. p. 121; Muther, *Aus dem Universitäts- u. Gelehrtenleben*, etc. p. 429.

[2] De Wette, vol. i. p. 466.

find no fire, will condemn and publicly burn the whole pontifical law, that swamp of heresies." At the end of November he had heard of the burning of his books at Louvain and Köln; he was only waiting to hear that the same holocaust had taken place at Leipzig. But early in December he made up his mind that he would wait no longer. A handbill was circulated among the students, calling upon "the pious and studious youths" of Wittenberg to assemble at nine o'clock of the morning of the 10th of December, outside the Elster gate, near the Spital, to witness "the pious and religious spectacle" of the burning of the books of the pontifical constitutions and the scholastic theology. It was a touch characteristic of Luther to add to his summons the words: "For perhaps now is the time in which it behoves that Antichrist should be revealed." A Master, whose name has not been preserved, had built up at the assigned place a pyre, upon which, when it was lighted, Luther placed first the Decretals, with other official documents of the Papacy, and finally the Bull, with the words, "Quia tu conturbasti Sanctum Domini, ideoque te conturbet ignis eternus" ("Because thou hast troubled the Holy One of God, so let eternal fire destroy thee!") This done he retired to his monastery, not many steps distant, accompanied by a crowd of Doctors and Masters who had witnessed the deed. The students, however, were not willing that what was to them, in part at least, a frolic, should end so soon. Some sang the *Te Deum*, others celebrated the mock obsequies of the Decretals. In the afternoon a cart, driven and filled by masquers, and decorated in ridicule of the Bull, went about the town collecting books of the kind that had been already burned, and the fire was kept up, with all hilarious mockery, till late in the afternoon. The next day Luther solemnly assured the audience to whom he was expounding the Psalter, that there could be no salvation for their souls, unless with their whole heart they separated themselves from the rule of the Pope. It was excommunication against excommunication; the Augustinian monk of Wittenberg against the Pontiff, whom all western Christians had hitherto obeyed as the vicar of Christ.[1]

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 527. *Exustionis Antichristinarum Decretalium Acta*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. pp. 251-255; Kolde, *Anal. Luth.* p. 26. The language

This decisive blow was followed and justified by two works; one, *An Assertion of all the Articles of Martin Luther condemned in Leo X's Bull*, which, dedicated to Fabian von Feilitsch on the 1st of December, was really published in January 1521. Of this, which appeared both in Latin and in German, it is not necessary to speak at length. The second, also issued in both languages, *Why the Books of the Roman Pontiff and of his Disciples have been burned by Dr. Martin Luther*, was a justification of his act, in answer to objections which were raised by some of the Canon lawyers of Wittenberg. In it he enumerates thirty propositions, taken from the books of Canon Law and the Papal Decretals, which he submits, without annotation, as being worthy of the fire. But the most important part of this little work is its prologue, in which Luther gives five reasons for his action. First, he declares that burning of bad books is an old custom, and appeals to the example of Paul at Ephesus. Secondly, he says that he is a baptized Christian, a sworn Doctor of Holy Scripture, and, moreover, a daily preacher, whose business it is to drive away all false, misleading, and unchristian doctrine; nor is his conscience excused if there are others, in like office, who neglect their duty. Yet, thirdly, he would not have undertaken to do this unless he had found that the Pope and his officials were wholly deaf to his instructions and warnings. Fourthly, he doubts, unless more evidence be forthcoming, whether the authors of the Bull are really obeying the commands of Leo, and ventures to hope that the books which he has burned, though authorised by his predecessors, are really not approved by him. And fifthly, because by the burning of his own books a great peril has come upon the truth, and suspicions may be raised among the untaught people, to the injury of many souls,

(De Wette, vol. i. p. 532) in which Luther announces to Spalatin the burning of the Bull is singularly brief and business-like: "Salutem. Anno MDXX, decima Decembris, hora nona, exusti sunt Wittenbergae ad orientalem portam, juxta S. Crucem, omnes libri Papae — Decretum, Decretales, Sext. Clement. Extravagant., et Bulla novissima Leonis X: item Summa Angelica, Chrysoprasus Eccii, et alia ejusdem autoris, Emseri, et quaedam alia, quae adjecta per alios sunt: ut videant incendiarii Papistae non esse magnarum virium libros exurere, quos confutare non possunt. Haec erunt nova." In the *Zeitschrift für K. G.* vol. iii. p. 325, will be found a curious poem on the burning of the Bull. It is in rhyming Latin verse, and may not impossibly be the very song, or a recollection of it, which the students of Wittenberg sang about the burning pile.

he, in his turn, by an instinct as he hopes of the Spirit, has burned books which there was no hope of amending and correcting to the preservation and confirmation of Christian truth. With this his defence is complete, his rebellion final. He has set up his own judgment against the authority of the Church. He declares that his action has been suggested to him by the Spirit of God. He condemns the system of the mediæval Church as unchristian, immoral, dangerous to men's souls. What is to be the result of his revolt, what is to become of himself he does not know; if he is safe to-day, he may fall into the hands of his enemies to-morrow; but he has spoken the truth that was in him, he has liberated his soul, and he is content. He writes to Staupitz, "I have burned the Pope's books and the Bull, at first trembling and praying, but now more joyful than in any other act of my whole life, for they were more pestilential than I thought." [1]

It only remains briefly to mention the six persons whose names Eck had inserted in the Bull. Carlstadt was carried forward into the full stream of the Reformation; at this moment he, like Luther, wrote pamphlets in his own defence, and made a formal appeal to a General Council. Of Dolzig we know little, except that he died in 1523. Sylvius Egranus, if we may judge from a single sentence in one of Luther's letters, more than wavered in his allegiance to the new faith, and afterwards joined the ranks of those who, without going back to the old Church, severely criticised the doctrines and methods of nascent Protestantism. Bernard Adelmann of Augsburg thought a speedy retreat the best course open to him, and made his submission to Eck on the latter's own terms. There remained Lazarus Spengler and Willibald Pirckheimer, the former in full sympathy with Luther's theological position, the latter a man unaccustomed to submit, especially to clerical dictation. Had they been left to themselves they would probably have stood out; but the city council of Nürnberg, of which Pirckheimer was a leading member, while Spengler was its servant, was not yet prepared for revolt against Rome, and urged them to compliance. It is not necessary to follow the

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 542; Erl. ed. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. pp. 154 *seq.*, 257 *seq.*, D.S. vol. xxiv. pp. 55 *seq.*, 151 *seq.*

story into its details; to narrate how Eck insisted, as his right, that the submission should be made to himself personally, and in the terms which he prescribed; how Duke William of Bavaria intervened in vain; how Pirckheimer and Spengler made fruitless appeal to the Pope. Aided by the influence of the Council of Nürnberg, which was moved not by Catholic zeal, but by desire of peace, Eck finally triumphed. Even so, the fact does not seem to have been properly reported at Rome; for both Pirckheimer's and Spengler's names appeared in the second Bull of January 3d, 1521. To some historians it has seemed doubtful whether, in consequence of the deaths of Leo X and Adrian VI, and the rapid progress of the Reformation in Nürnberg, the two offenders were ever formally absolved by the Pope; but the question has been definitely settled in the affirmative by a lately published extract from the archives of the Vatican. It might seem at first sight as if the chief result of the Bull of June 1520 had been to enable a vindictive theologian to wreak a petty personal spite upon enemies who otherwise stood too high for him to touch. But it also helped to make it clear that there was no longer any resting-place between Wittenberg and Rome.[1]

[1] Riederer, *Beytrag*, passim; *Nachrichten*, vol. i. pp. 167, 318, 438; vol. ii. pp. 54, 179; for Sylvius Egranus, De Wette, vol. i. p. 522; Döllinger, *Die Reformation*, vol. i. p. 135. [For Egranus, see further an article by Dr. Buchwald, in *Beiträge zur sächsischen Kirchengeschichte*, pt. iv. 1888.] For Pirckheimer and Spengler, Wiedemann, *Joh. Eck*, p. 178 *seq.*; Roth. *Die Einführung der Reform. in Nürnberg*, p. 81 *seq.*; Brieger, pp. 224, 245; Balan, p. 18 (in the Bull, Spengler is curiously called Johannes), p. 279: "Vi si mandano due brevi, uno per l'absolution di quei due da Norimberga." Vicecancellarius Aleandro.

CHAPTER VIII

LUTHER'S RELATION TO THE THEOLOGY OF THE LATIN CHURCH

THE moment at which we leave Luther waiting for a summons to the Diet of Worms is a convenient one at which to interrupt our narrative, in order to ascertain his exact relation to the theological system of the Latin Church. The year 1520 had been with him one of incessant literary activity. In it were published five of his most important works; none of them long, but each marking a distinct advance in theory. These are the *Sermon of Good Works*,[1] the tractate, *Against the highly renowned Romanists of Leipzig*,[2] the *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*,[3] the *Prelude concerning the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*,[4] and finally, the little treatise, *Of the Freedom of a Christian Man*.[5] At this time of his life literary activity meant for Luther a gradual working out of his characteristic principles of thought, and a more careful definition of his theological position. As we have already shown, he was not a reformer all at once. He kept his attitude of submission to the Church as long as he was able—longer indeed than could be logically justified, either by himself at the time or by his defenders since. He was sincerely reluctant to be thrust out of communion with her, and resented nothing so much as the imputation of heresy. At a time when he still held office in the Augustinian order

[1] Erl. D. S. vol. xvi. p. 118 *et seq.*; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 196 *et seq.*

[2] Erl. D. S. vol. xxvii. p. 85 *et seq.*; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 277 *et seq.*

[3] Erl. D. S. vol. xxi. p. 274 *et seq.*; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 380 *et seq.*

[4] Erl. *Opp.* var. arg. vol. v. p. 13 *et seq.*; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 484 *et seq.*

[5] (Latin) Erl. *Opp.* vol. iv. p. 219; (German) D. S. vol. xxvii. p. 173 *et seq.*

he maintained his characteristic principle of justification by faith; he appealed from Aristotle, the Schoolmen, the Fathers, to Scripture; nor did he feel that his action was inconsistent with sound Catholicism. It was only gradually that he perceived whither principles which had become incorporated with his being were leading him, and saw, after a hard struggle, that he must either give them up or rebel against the Papacy. But on this account it is a difficult, and not a very useful task, to attempt to define Luther's theological position at any given moment. The period of flux and change is not yet passed. The road on which he is travelling is plain enough; but he is not to-day where he was yesterday, and it is impossible to predict how far he will go.

Nor must it be forgotten that the peculiarity of Luther's movement was the enunciation of principles of belief which, on being worked out to their logical issues, were found to be dissolvent of the Catholic system. He saw with the keenest insight, he felt with the hottest indignation, the practical abuses of the Church, and so advocated a large scheme of disciplinary reform. But there is no reason to suppose that had this been his sole object he would have been more successful in attaining it than others before him. Where reforming Popes had failed, where councils had decreed in vain, where princes had exhausted themselves in fruitless remonstrance, it was hardly likely that a simple monk, however eloquent, however earnest, should prevail. It was only under the pressure of an attack which was felt to be far more deadly that at last, after innumerable hesitations and delays, the Council of Trent was assembled, and the work of the Counter-Reformation begun. The question thus decided was of revolution as against reform, the rebuilding of the Christian Church on fresh foundations as against the repair and cleansing of the ancient structure. The facts of Christianity were taken for granted on both sides; but Luther looked at them in a new light, approached them with fresh principles of belief, gave them a different practical application. Of course his contention was that in so doing he was only reverting to primitive ways, and restoring to the Church the freshness, the purity, the force of apostolic faith; while at the same

time he owned that he derived his chief intellectual and religious impulse from the study of the Scriptures. But the fact remains that the new system was in irreconcilable opposition to the old, that Lutheranism could not live within the Church, and that if Lutheranism were victorious the Church must crumble away. And this irreconcilability was perhaps most evident at the moment at which Luther's principles were first distinctly enunciated by himself and repudiated by Rome. Presently, when heretics of every kind bettered his instructions, and pushed his doctrines to conclusions for which he was not prepared, a reaction took place. He himself restated his principles, with limitations and safeguards, while it was reserved for a school of mediating theologians, of which Melanchthon was the head, to try to minimise the differences which separated Wittenberg from Rome.

The Church of Rome claimed to be the visible representative of Christ upon earth. Founded by the Saviour himself upon the rock of Peter, it was a divine organisation for the administration of the life of God to man, perpetually guided and governed by the Holy Spirit. Its claims, therefore, were exclusive: no other Church could live beside it; Greeks and Bohemians were heretics and schismatics. It existed before the New Testament, which gave an account of its origin; and it did not rest upon its authority so much as guaranteed its authenticity to its own members. In like manner the creeds had successively arisen out of its collective consciousness; it possessed the power of developing and defining doctrine; the Church was not tried by conformity to any independent standard of truth, but itself authoritatively declared what was truth. As a matter of fact the Scriptures had fallen into the background in the system of the mediæval Church; first, overlaid with patristic comment and interpretation, and next, woven into the complex web of the scholastic philosophy, they had ceased to make an independent impression upon the clerical, and, much more, upon the popular mind. While such part of them as was susceptible of pictorial representation lived in the sculptured porch, or glowed in the painted window, their plain meaning was hidden by mystical and allegorical interpretation, which misapplied them to the support of the

Church's highest pretensions; and the most childish legends of the saints took their place in popular preaching by the side of the Gospel narratives. In like manner, to documents like the creeds, which were in different ways genuine monuments of Christian antiquity, were added forged decretals, upon the basis of which arbitrary canons of ambitious popes built up a vast system of ecclesiastical law, the origin of which was to uncritical students lost in the mists of an indefinite past, but which, in the comprehensiveness of its application to the facts of life, weighed with imposing authority on the minds of men.

This mystic communion, which alone represented religion to Western Europe, was the sole custodian of the Sacraments, the sevenfold channel by which the indispensable grace of God descended upon the spirit of man. Without participation in the sacraments there was no possibility of spiritual life in this world, or of salvation in another; they were the machinery, so to speak, through which the grace, earned by the sufferings and death of Christ, was distributed to each single soul in order to restore or to confirm its spiritual health. A sacrament is defined by the Catechism of the Council of Trent to be "a sensible thing, which, by the institution of God, has the power of both signifying and effecting holiness and righteousness."[1] It consists, therefore, of two parts: an outward sign and an inward grace, but without the external element the internal cannot exist. And it is further essential to the nature of sacraments, that except in certain rare and carefully specified cases, which are recognised as exceptions to a general principle, they can only be administered by an order of priests solemnly set apart for that purpose. These ideas are closely involved with that of the apostolical succession. Through every age of the Church the sacramental ordination of priests has been handed down from Peter, to whom Christ delivered the power of binding and loosing. The sacraments are thus the tie which not only binds all true members of the Church in one, but which unites every generation with that which has preceded and that which is to follow it. And it is plain that if the grace of God, which is indispensable to the weakness of

[1] *Catechismus ex decreto Conc. Trid.* p. 116.

humanity, can be communicated only in this way—and if sacraments can be administered only by a body of men who are organised into a hierarchy, obeying one code of laws and animated by a common purpose, they furnish the basis of a complete and most effectual discipline. Taken in its crudest form, as apprehended by the common people, the theory amounts to this, that the Church, by its methods of excommunication and interdict, can shut out men and nations from any access to God; that it can arrest in this world the flow of the waters of life, and in another close, by its authoritative fiat, the gates of heaven.

History shows that so vast and well compacted a power as this cannot be safely entrusted to any organised priesthood, however high its aims, however rigid its principles of self-government. But the spiritual tyranny which lies involved in these principles was made at once more intense and more hateful by the fact that it was concentrated in one hand and used for the basest purposes. It is impossible, in this place, to give even the briefest sketch of the process by which the federated republic of the Church became at last an autocracy, and the Bishop of Rome, at first only *primus inter pares*, was developed into the Pope, who received unquestioned homage from all other prelates, and admitted only a qualified dependence upon General Councils. The establishment of the monastic, especially the mendicant orders, had much to do with it: the enforced celibacy of the clergy worked in the same direction. The claims of Papal authority, supported in documents the authenticity of which was not questioned till they had done their work, were urged by a succession of astute and ambitious pontiffs: the position of the popes was strengthened by the fact that they represented the rights and immunities of the Church against what was called the usurpation of emperors and kings. *Nullum tempus occurrit Ecclesiae* was a principle of policy which the Court of Rome never forgot; a claim, temporarily abandoned, was never suffered to lapse; and pretensions, which powerful monarchs had successfully resisted, were renewed against weak ones. The international position of the popes, once universally acknowledged, afforded a starting-point for fresh advances. One monarch, one national church, was

played off against another, with the inevitable result of lessening the independence of all. The captivity at Avignon, and the consequent schism in the Church, seemed at one time likely to frustrate the plans which such popes as Gregory VII and Innocent III had laid, and sanguine ecclesiastical reformers hoped great things from the Councils of Pisa, of Constanz, and of Basel. But the principle of the Papacy emerged stronger than ever from the chaos of discredited synods, and it was reserved for the popes of the latter half of the fifteenth and the first years of the sixteenth century to show how much shame and wrong Christendom could endure without making a decisive effort to shake off a yoke which ages of use had bound upon its shoulders. I have already spoken at length of the moral consequences of this state of things, and have enumerated the abuses under which every Christian nation, above all Germany, groaned, and not without frequent complaint. There is no real conflict of evidence here. That Rome was a sink of iniquity is a fact undisputed and indisputable. That the Papacy strove to establish its own autocracy over all national churches, and used the power which it had acquired in the most corrupt and venal way, is proved over and over again, not by the invectives of reformers, but by the complaints of Diets and the remonstrances of orthodox monarchs.

Every system of sacramental religion has a necessary tendency to the external and the formal. The visible element of the sacrament naturally draws to itself the attention of the vulgar, to the comparative neglect of the internal and the spiritual. From the definition of a sacrament which has been given follows, almost by logical necessity, the inference that, once the external conditions are fulfilled, no internal conditions on the side of man are of any consequence; that the flagitious priest may administer, that the faithless recipient may partake of a real sacrament. A sacrament becomes an *opus operatum:* a thing done, an item set down to the credit side of the account, whatever the spiritual state of either giver or recipient may be. The same tendency of mind illustrates itself in the theory of good works, which grew out of the Church's doctrine of penitence and the disciplinary system dependent upon it. The original basis of repentance, in the

love of God and the awe of His holiness, gradually faded out of view, and attention was concentrated on the number, the variety, the severity of the penitential acts themselves, rather than on the state of mind from which they flowed. Benefactions to the Church, pilgrimages, devotion to relics, repetitions of the Rosary, fastings, self-mortifications, acquired a value in themselves—until at last, in the practical corruption of the doctrine of indulgences, a pecuniary equivalent was substituted for them, and escape from the consequences of sin was publicly sold in the market-place. The first step in the descent which led to this moral abyss was the introduction of an external element into the soul's spiritual communion with God: the second, the administration and interpretation of that external element by a priesthood, subject not only to the ordinary temptations of humanity, but to those which lie in wait for a sacred caste. It is a besetting weakness of mankind that the sign should usurp the place of the thing signified—that men should take refuge from the difficult simplicity of spiritual in the tangible attractiveness of formal worship.

It is always difficult to state, with due theological accuracy, the principles and doctrines of the Latin Church. For while it boasts a continuity of history and a tenacity of purpose such as no other Church can show, it always turns one side to scientific exposition and another to popular apprehension. The Neapolitan peasant, who chides his favourite Madonna for not attending to his petitions, looks at the cultus of the Saints in quite a different light from that in which it is presented by the Canons of the Council of Trent; and a recipient of the consecrated wafer may devoutly believe in the Real Presence without being able to give an intelligent account of the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Pious opinions are often suffered to grow up in the Church, to which in due time the seal of infallibility may or may not be set, according to the exigencies of the case. The Counter-Reformation quietly ignored the abuses which had gathered round the doctrine of indulgences; while, on the other hand, we have seen in our own day that theory of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, about which Dominicans and Franciscans wrangled so long, adopted as an article of faith. But there can be no uncertainty as to either

the informing principles, the ruling tendencies of the Catholic system, or as to the practical abuses of it which confronted Luther. These were the formality and hollowness which characterised so large a part of religious worship; the superstition attaching to relics, places of pilgrimage, indulgences, popular miracles; the shameless immorality of Rome and the Papal Court; the oppressions and extortions practised upon Germany in the name of ecclesiastical law and order; the scandals of clerical celibacy; the abuses of monasticism; the decline of national morals. The contention of Erasmus was, that a wider knowledge of Christian antiquity and the extension of "good letters" would cure these evils; of such men as Duke George, that the Church itself could effect a disciplinary reform, if only its princes and potentates would set about the task in earnest. It was the peculiarity of Luther to discern that "the whole head was sick and the whole heart faint," and that only new principles of belief could lead to a purer practice.

The central and germinal point of Luther's theological system was his doctrine of justification by faith. When he was engaged in his cell at Erfurt in working out the problem of his spiritual fate, the difficulty which perplexed him was how to please God, and how to know, with a certainty that should bring peace with it, that he *had* pleased Him. The most painful performance of ritual duty involved no such assurance; and it was equally absent from the struggles of his heart for a perfect love and a complete service. It lay in the very nature of the case that it was impossible to know that the conditions of acceptance with God were all fulfilled; the troubled spirit loaded itself with perpetually fresh self-accusation; nor could it venture to believe that there was no false note in the most passionate penitence, no flaw in the most carefully planned obedience. And the God who asked this full tale of sacrifice was no benignant Father stooping down in love upon His children, and meeting their offering half-way, but a stern, almost a vindictive Judge, who visited in wrath the servants who had failed to perform an impossible task. Out of this terrible slough of despond Luther was extricated by the doctrine of justification by faith. When once he believed that Christ had already done for him what

he could not do for himself; that his sins and shortcomings were Christ's, Christ's strength, purity, obedience, his; and that God, whom he could never believe would accept him for his own sake, was infinitely propitious to him for his Saviour's sake, the burthen fell from his shoulders, the sadness was lifted from his heart. The impossible task of pleasing God was at an end, for he knew that in Christ He was evermore gracious; while for the hard service of the slave was substituted the child's happy obedience. And, first, from this sense of the free reconciliation of the soul with God, and next, from its intimate incorporation with the living holiness of Christ, flow an eagerness to please God, a natural inclination of the will towards all godliness, which are fruitful in good works. That which was before a toil, a task, a struggle, becomes an unforced and happy activity of the spirit, which performs the will of God because in its marriage with Christ it is one with God.

Justification by faith, thus conceived, is essentially a spiritual, almost a mystical doctrine. It reduces the elements of religion to the simplest possible. On the one side there is the weak and sinful soul of man, desiring, under the influence of divine grace, to be at one with God. On the other, there is the spectacle of the Saviour's love, the pathetic reality of His atoning sacrifice, the promise of reconciliation with the Father which He holds out. And faith grasps the promise—that is all. Nothing more is needed. In that single act all the possibilities of the spiritual life are involved. It breeds gratitude, affection, aspiration, self-mastery, self-denial; while all grow into finer strength and a more rounded symmetry as the soul draws vital energy from its mystic communion with Christ. At the same time there is nothing miraculous in this; the process is in strict accordance with well-known laws of human nature. Men are moved by their affections and passions: especially are all great moral changes effected in a certain fire of the soul; what they vehemently love draws them to itself and moulds them into its own likeness. So Luther found the force which, making him a new creature, gave him peace for struggle, happy obedience for hopeless effort, a merciful Father for an inexorable Judge, in the love and gratitude which the acceptance of the infinite boon

offered by Christ awoke in his heart. But in this process there is no formal element whatever. It is a matter simply between the soul and its Saviour. No material conditions are attached to it. It is all conducted in the secrecy of divine communion. It asks for no witnesses; it needs no guarantees; it is complete in itself. A soul set free from the bondage of sin into the liberty of the sons of God has everything, and knows that it has everything.

That this doctrine needed to be fenced about on the side of antinomianism must have presented itself to Luther's mind at a very early date. If he had not seen it himself, his Catholic critics would have been quick to point it out to him. Duke George's characteristic objection to his preaching was that it would make the common people reckless. Nor was Luther himself always sufficiently careful in his enunciation of it; his mind was naturally prone to that kind of paradox which consists in putting one side of a truth in the strongest language, without regard to balance or symmetry of statement. This was more and more the case as he grew older and felt more keenly the irritation of opponents; but even in 1520 he could say startling things of his favourite principle. "So you see," he says in the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*,[1] "how rich is a Christian or baptized man, who, even if he will, cannot lose his salvation, by no matter what sins, unless he will not believe. For no sin can damn him save unbelief alone." But as a rule he sees the danger into which men of less spiritual insight, of a poorer capacity of moral passion than himself, are likely to fall, in substituting a mere intellectual acceptance of the atonement for that living incorporation with Christ which can alone exercise a transforming power over the heart and life. And he is very anxious to show that the doctrine of justification by faith not only does not wither the fruits of godliness, but is the secret of their life and beauty. This is the object of the great *Sermon of Good Works*, which is one of the characteristic writings of the year 1520. In it he first states and defends the theory of the relation of faith to good works which has been drawn out above, and then proceeds to apply it to every precept of the Decalogue in turn. The result of thus showing

[1] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 59; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 529.

how faith is the living principle of obedience is a complete system of Christian morals.

It was therefore, in all probability, not a mere accident that Tetzel and the Indulgence were the first point at which Luther attacked the system of the Church. Between 1507 and 1517 he must have seen with questioning eyes many things in the Roman administration of religion with which he could not wholly agree; but he was not excited to protest, or led to dream of rebellion. But the theory which lay at the basis of the Indulgence cut the doctrine, which was the principle of his spiritual life, across the grain. Merits that could be transferred, even by the coarse commercial process of purchase; good works that were efficacious to salvation, and yet were purely formal and perfunctory, involving no pious passion in those who performed them, nor springing from any spiritual movement within the soul, were altogether alien to the theory that the moral life of the believer had its origin and renewed its strength in faith in Christ. The Reformer, as he looked back upon himself at Erfurt, wrestling for peace and holiness, and finding them in the assurance of divine forgiveness, stands at the opposite pole of the religious life from the burghers of Wittenberg, who flaunted in his face the letters of indulgence which they had bought for so much hard cash of Tetzel at Jüterbogk. He had no choice but to strike and spare not: this monstrous perversion of Christian theory was like that "other gospel" against which Paul warned his Galatian converts. But the practical effect of Luther's doctrine was not confined to the deadly blow which it dealt at the traffic in indulgences; it extended to the whole moral administration of the Church, as it was popularly understood. For it substituted an inner for an outer standard in the estimate of good works. Not the regularity and the frequency of prayers; not the toil of pilgrimages; not the splendour of benefactions to the Church; not the extremities of self-mortification—much more, not any vicarious fulfilment of the Church's demands which a man could purchase—but the faith which might or might not be hidden in these observances was the main thing. And it is plain that this is a matter of which God alone can be the judge. The Church cannot weigh, or measure, or estimate, or reward,

or sell it. And with the power of thus treating human merits, its accustomed hold upon the allegiance of the common people was gone. Human life in this world passed into a region whither the Church could not follow; and it could no longer reign in purgatory nor open the gates of heaven. Faith leaves the soul alone with its Saviour, and is, in its essence, incompatible with ecclesiastical estimate or mediation.

The same principle, carried to its complete logical issue, is fatal to the sacramental theory of religion. For if faith, the immediate contact of the soul with God, be all that is required, and is indeed a force of spiritual change and renewal by which every other is superseded, no material mediation of any kind is necessary. Without faith no sacrament can be efficacious, with faith no sacrament can be essential. It is true that this sweeping view of the matter is an argument, not so much for reducing the number of sacraments from seven to three, as for abolishing them altogether; a measure for which Luther, in view of the Scriptural institution of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, was by no means prepared. But that he saw whither his theory logically led, and was not altogether unwilling to go with it, is clear from the fact that he more than once quotes with approbation Augustine's dictum, *Crede et manducâsti*, "Believe and thou hast eaten." It would be only too easy to show that in after years he receded from this advanced position, and, under the influence of a doctrine of the Real Presence which he believed to be Scriptural, maintained that the body and blood of Christ were partaken of by the ungodly recipient. He is puzzled even in 1520 to reconcile the omnipotent necessity of faith with the efficacy of infant baptism, and is obliged to fall back upon a vicarious faith of sponsors, and a certain prevailingness in the prayers of the Church. But the radical incompatibility between a doctrine of justification by faith only and a theory of sacraments remained; and if Luther failed fully to recognise it, it became the acknowledged basis of a more advanced and logical Protestantism than his.

The *Prelude on the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* made its attack on this line. A sacrament Luther defines to be a promise made by God to man, accompanied by a material

sign which sets its seal, as it were, upon the covenant. Thus, for instance, in the Lord's Supper there is both a testament and a sacrament; first, the will of the dying Christ, promising to His disciples the remission of their sins, and next, the sacrament, the bread and the wine, which are the body and the blood. But the essential thing here is the acceptance of the promise by faith. If that is so, no actual participation in the material symbols is necessary. "Believe and thou hast eaten." Yet if this is what the mass really is, it cannot be regarded as an *opus operatum* which can be performed for another, or set down to a second account: "as well," says Luther,[1] "be baptized for another, be married for another, be ordained for another, be anointed for another." The case of baptism is similar. Here the divine promise is, "Whoso believes, and is baptized, shall be saved," and the place of faith in regard to the sacrament is plain enough, until the difficulty as to infant baptism arises, to which I have already alluded. It is not quite so easy to bring penitence within the category of sacraments, as above defined; Luther finds the word of promise is, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,"—but he fails to point out the corresponding signs. The other four sacraments—Confirmation, Marriage, Orders, Extreme Unction, he altogether rejects, as not coming within his definition. Possibly a rigid criticism might succeed in proving that in this cardinal point of controversy Luther was not always sure of his own theoretical ground, or did not apply his principles with logical thoroughness; at the same time his general position is at once clear and unassailable. The faith of the receiver is the living element in the sacrament. All sacraments have been instituted for the furtherance of faith, which alone justifies.

From this principle Luther draws many strong and sweeping conclusions. The mass is no sacrifice. Transubstantiation is an invention of men. Vows ought to be abolished as interfering with the efficacy of baptism. From the abuse of the sacrament of penitence has arisen the multifarious tyranny of the Church's disciplinary system. In like manner, to regard

[1] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 47; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 521.

marriage as a sacrament has given the Papacy an opportunity of arbitrary interference with the domestic affairs of men which ought to be taken away. On the whole the principle of faith makes for freedom. Of faith there can be no external judgment or regulation; salvation is, so to speak, a transaction between the soul and its Saviour, with which no third person, not even the Church, has a right to meddle, and upon which no conditions other than God has laid down ought to be imposed. Nothing can be more definitely outspoken than Luther's assertion of Christian liberty against Papal or ecclesiastical aggression. "I say, therefore, that neither Pope, nor Bishop, nor any man, has the right of imposing a single syllable upon a Christian man, unless it be done by his own consent; and whatever is done otherwise is done in the spirit of tyranny."[1] "Upon Christians no law can rightfully be imposed, either by men or angels, except so far as they are willing—for we are free from all."[2] Faith is anterior to the Church; how then should the Church lay restrictions upon it, or annex conditions to it? "For the Church is born from the word of promise by faith, and by the same is nourished and preserved; that is, the Church is constituted by the promises of God, not the promises of God by the Church."[3] Faith involves "the freedom of the Christian man."

From the same great principle springs a new doctrine of the Church. It is the Communion of Saints, the assembly of those who have apprehended the promises of God by faith. But the principle of communion is internal, not external, and the lines of the invisible do not coincide with those of any visible Church. Nor can any excommunication do more than remove a man from external fellowship by depriving him of the sacraments, which are its material signs: it cannot touch the spiritual fellowship of which faith, hope, and charity are the essence. In a word, wherever faith is, there is the Kingdom of God. Of this Church Christ alone is the Head, nor has He any earthly vicegerent. The Papacy, indeed, may be admitted as an actual fact: it exists, and is therefore to be

[1] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 68; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 537. Weimar, vol. vi. p. 536.
[2] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 102; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 560.
[3] Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 70;

taken as the expression of the Divine Will: men should not withstand it, but bear it, as they would the Turk, were he set over them. To this statement, however, there are two practical limitations. "First," says Luther, "I will not suffer it that men should enact new articles of faith, and blame, insult, condemn all other Christians as heretics, schismatics, infidels, for the sole reason that they are not under the Pope. . . . The second, that I will accept all that the Pope enacts, makes, and does, in order that I may judge it according to Holy Scripture. For me, he shall remain under Christ, and suffer himself to be judged by Scripture."[1] Each of these principles is sufficiently far-reaching. Although Luther himself would have been the last to acknowledge it, although in the very book from which this extract is taken,[2] he speaks of human reason with a contempt that afterwards became habitual with him, they involve a declaration of the rights and duty of private judgment in matters of religion. Unhappily the time was not far distant at which he was to stand in the position of an orthodox theologian, over against heretics who had pushed his characteristic doctrines to unwelcome conclusions, and his principles would not bear the strain. The lesson of perfect religious toleration is too difficult and complex to be mastered by any single generation: if ever learned at all, it is from the slow instruction of ages.

From this conception of the Church we pass, by no violent transition, to the theory of the universal priesthood of Christians. The believer, incorporated with Christ by faith, receives from Him his royalty and his priesthood. We are all kings, all priests like the Saviour, with whom we are one. According to this sweeping doctrine, there is no difference between the peasant and the priest, save one of office only. The former tills the ground, the latter administers the sacraments, and that is all. Orders are not a sacrament, but simply a matter of Church organisation; and the "indelible character" of the priesthood is a figment of men. Suppose a body of Christian believers cast upon a desert island, who by popular election

[1] *Wider den hochberühmten Romanisten zu Leipzig*, Erl. D. S. vol. xxvii. p. 136; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 322.

[2] Erl. D. S. vol. xxvii. pp. 93, 94; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 291 *seq.*

chose one of their number to perform the functions of a priest —a priest in very deed he would be as long as he held his office, and when he resigned it, or was deposed, would become a layman again like the rest. It is plain that this principle, from which Luther never swerved, and which he apprehended with much more logical completeness than the analogous principle of the purely spiritual character of the sacraments, effectually undermined the disciplinary system of the Papacy. It abolished the religious monopoly of the Church. It made it possible for a national Church to come into existence without at the same time cutting itself off from fellowship with the Divine Head and the invisible communion of Saints. At one stroke it freed those who accepted it from the tyranny of all existing priesthoods. More important still, it was a further step in the direction of bringing the individual believer into personal communion with God. No sacred caste could henceforth claim a peculiar privilege of presenting men's homage to God, of conveying God's grace to men. Whatever functions rightly belonged to the priesthood were thrown open to all the faithful.

Throughout the long mental processes which had led Luther to these results his method had been largely Scriptural. It was under the influence of the Bible that he had emancipated himself from the scholastic theology which had been instilled into him at Erfurt. Augustine had taught him much; the *Deutsche Theologia* had interwoven itself with the stuff of his thinking; but it was in his growing knowledge of the Scriptures that he had rebelled against Aristotle and the Schoolmen, and had recognised at last that there was an authority in matters of religion behind the Fathers, above the Pope, to which even Councils were subject. He owed his own spiritual liberation, for the most part, to words of Scripture the meaning of which he had painfully spelled out, first in Latin, then in Greek and in Hebrew. Under these circumstances we need not wonder that the Bible made so deep an impression upon him as to overbear in his mind the spirit of humanism. He soon came to value the study of the ancient languages only for the help which they gave in the interpretation of the Scriptures, and, for a while at least, carried away with him in the

same direction that born humanist, Melanchthon. No sooner had he taken his degree of Doctor of Theology than he began courses of exegetical lectures, which, while they attracted large audiences and produced a deep religious impression, gave the lecturer himself the opportunity of gradually beating out his theological convictions and co-ordinating them into a system. Presently we shall note that his way of looking at Scripture was far from scientific, as indeed in that age it could not but be; and he did not yet see the necessity of some theory by which his doctrine of salvation could be brought into intellectual accord with the sum of Scriptural facts and utterances. What had really happened was, that the Pauline theology, to which Augustine had first introduced him, had taken hold of him in the Apostle's living and burning words, had transformed his whole nature, had brought him out of darkness into light, had given him peace for disquietude. Naturally, what had so moved and strengthened him he proclaimed to the world. The words of his teacher might have been perpetually upon his lips, "I believed, and therefore have I spoken."

Luther began by the unquestioning acceptance of the scholastic method of interpreting Scripture. According to this, it has a double sense, one literal, the other mystical or spiritual. The latter is threefold, as the old verse runs—

> "Litera gesta docet, quid credas Allegoria,
> Tropologia quid agas, quid speres Anagogia."

The literal is thus the least important sense; the true gold of Scriptural thought lies deep beneath the surface, and is only to be got at by much patient digging. Another difficulty is that the theory of the fourfold sense at once throws the reins of critical restraint upon the necks of commentators, and takes away all possibility of certain interpretation. Any one who has the slightest knowledge of mediæval exegesis knows that while the plain significance of Scripture was constantly passed over with contemptuous neglect, the wildest absurdities of mystical comment were the delight of interpreters, who vied with one another in their efforts to find evidence for the doctrines and practices of the Church in the unlikeliest places. It says much for Luther's good sense and critical insight that he gradually abandoned a method which was not only

universally practised by orthodox theologians, but could claim the powerful advocacy of Erasmus. In his earliest exposition of the Psalter, indeed, he is upon the traditional ground. He makes the distinction between the literal and the mystical sense of Scripture, the same as that which the Apostle draws between "the letter that killeth and the Spirit that giveth life"—an identification against which he afterwards contended with great vehemence. He goes so far in one passage as to announce a sixfold sense in Scripture. But by the time we come to the "Decem Praecepta Wittenbergensi praedicata populo" of 1518, all this is changed. He enumerates among the offenders against the Eighth Commandment "those foolish and inane dreamers who, playing with the literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical sense," make of Scripture what they will.[1] He thinks that such a fourfold interpretation of the Bible is tolerable only if regarded as rudiments for beginners. In 1521 he is prepared to speak more strongly still. In one of his pamphlets against Emser, who had declared that if the Bible were to be interpreted literally, it were better to read a legend of Virgil's, he says,[2] "The Holy Ghost is the all simplest writer and speaker that is in heaven or on earth: therefore His words can have no more than one simplest sense, which we call the scriptural or literal meaning." Whether Luther, throughout his career, strictly adhered to this principle, it is not now necessary to inquire: it was the general law of his teaching, and its importance cannot be over-estimated.

This new canon of interpretation was one of the last in a series of facts which restored the Bible to a position in the Church from which it had been long excluded. It was to the task of multiplying copies of the Scriptures that the new art of printing first addressed itself. Editions of the Vulgate were repeatedly issued during the latter half of the fifteenth century; the first Hebrew Bible was printed at Soncino in 1488, the first New Testament in Greek at Basel in 1516. In like manner Bibles in both High and Low German had multiplied during the same period; and though books were still scarce and dear, compared with the abundance and the cheapness of later times, the Scriptures had become accessible to all who

[1] Weimar ed. vol. i. p. 507. [2] Erl. D. S. vol. xxvii. p. 259.

seriously desired to read them. Now, for the first time, it was announced that they were of private interpretation: that to ascertain their meaning, and to receive their inspiration, no special erudition, no acquaintance with artificial rules of exegesis, no practice in mystical speculation were necessary, but only an attentive mind and a docile heart. On the one side, this principle laid the axe to the root of the jungle of absurd and contradictory theological comment which had overgrown the literal and historical sense of Scripture. On the other, it brought men's minds into immediate contact with a literature which experience has proved to be more powerful and quickening than any other. Men have misinterpreted the Bible in all ages, have drawn from it many unwarranted inferences, have built upon it many unstable edifices of doctrine, but they have never failed to be moved by it. The fresh interest of its narratives, the charm and the warning of its examples, the power of its words to touch the heart and to prick the conscience, attest the religious life which breathes and moves in it; and its spell is naturally the strongest upon a generation that has grown up in ignorance of it. And what made it particularly powerful as an engine of reformation was its picture of the primitive Church, which came like a revelation to men whose only idea of a Christian community was that with whose vices and whose weaknesses they were only too well acquainted. To know Peter threw a new light on the character and pretensions of his Roman successor. In such Prince-prelates as at once oppressed and plundered Germany, it was hard to trace the lineaments of the Apostles. Whatever arguments might be adduced in defence of existing institutions —monasteries, celibate priests, indulgences, veneration of relics, cultus of Mary and the Saints,—it was startling to find no trace of them in the New Testament. The Church was, as it were, put on its defence, and invited to account for its divergence from primitive purity and simplicity.

At the same time, we do not find that Luther ever distinctly asked himself whether the authority of Scripture was based on anything more ultimate than itself, or appreciated the force of the objections that might be urged against it. These difficulties belong to a later age and a different mood of mind.

It was not till modern criticism had done its slow work upon the Bible that the peculiarities of its structure and the difficulties, scientific, historical, doctrinal, which arise out of them, raised a host of questions as to the ground of its authority which are still the subjects of eager controversy. Some of the more obvious of these difficulties Luther soon began to feel, and had his own trenchant way of settling—a way which cannot be described as critical. But in 1520, and in the years that preceded, it is truest to say that the newly-revealed Bible had wholly taken possession of him. He was too deeply impressed with the truth that he found there, and the life which flowed out of it, to raise cavils as to its authority. It answered for him all the questionings of his eager soul, his restless intellect. It began by setting him free from the bondage of sin and death; it sustained him in his successive struggles with hostile authority; it vindicated itself as above Aristotle, Fathers, Schoolmen, Pope, Councils. He does not seem to have been tempted to go a step farther, and to ask whether the ultimate ground of authority was not in the interpreting mind rather than in the interpreted text. Till he presently found by woful experience that men could read the Bible with open eyes and not come to the same conclusions as himself, he thought that the path was so plain that "not even a wayfaring man could err therein;" the splendour of the light was everything, the keenness of the perceiving eye nothing. He had no inclination to inquire into the ground of Scriptural authority. The weight and force of the appeal which the Bible made to him were enough.

Nor did he ask himself, What was the Bible? Were all parts of it of equal authority? Were there books which, from uncertainty of authorship or want of general recognition by the Church, made a less imperious demand than others upon the mental submission of believers? In the dispute with Eck at Leipzig on the subject of purgatory, Luther had drawn a distinction between the authority of the books of Maccabees [1] and others which were more indisputably canonical, while in his *Resolutiones super propositionibus suis Lipsiae disputatis* he for

[1] Weimar ed. (*Disputatio I. Eccii et M. Lutheri Lipsiae habita*, 1519), vol. ii. p. 324.

the first time uttered that disparaging judgment of the Epistle of James which he so often repeated in terms still stronger.[1] It was upon the latter provocation that Carlstadt entered the lists with a little book, *De Canonicis Scripturis libellus*,[2] which was published at Wittenberg in the autumn of 1520, and followed a few months afterwards by a German translation, in some points altered from the original, *Welche Bücher Biblisch seint*. Carlstadt, who had been expounding the Epistle of James to a class of students, seems to have fancied that Luther's disparagement of that letter had something to do with jealousy and animosity towards himself, and devotes a disproportionate amount of space to the proof, that even if its Apostolical authorship is uncertain it is not on that account the less canonical. But the tract is a remarkable one, inasmuch as it starts a discussion which, however important and necessary it may seem to modern eyes to be, the Reformers almost unanimously agreed to neglect. We find little to put in line with Carlstadt's *Libellus* till we come to Faustus Socinus, *De Sacrae Scripturae Auctoritate*.

In Carlstadt's treatment of the inner ground of the authority of Scripture there is nothing new. He founds it upon the words of Scripture. He collects passages in which Biblical writers or speakers claim a divine origin and authority for what they utter. What is curious here is the use which he makes of Augustine, quoting his dicta so frequently and with such absolute respect as to expose himself to the imputation of wishing to base the authority of the Bible on that of the great African Father. But as to the weight and supremacy of the authority of Scripture he is very explicit. It excludes all other authority. It furnishes the test by which all other writings may be tried. Any Christian layman is, by its help, placed in a position to judge all Bishops and Doctors. It is above Popes, above Councils. No usage of the Church, however venerable, however universal, is to be quoted against it. But this is only on condition that the interpreter of Scripture

[1] Weimar ed. vol. ii. p. 425. Conf. *De Captiv. Babyl.*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. v. p. 111; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 569.

[2] *De Canonicis Scripturis libellus D. Andreae Bodenstein Carlstadii Sacrae Theologiae Doctoris et Archidiaconis Wittenbergensis*, 1520. A reprint of this rare and curious tract will be found in Credner, *Zur Geschichte des Kanons*, Halle, 1847.

surrenders himself entirely to its guidance. He is to keep himself strictly within its bounds; nor does it tolerate any admixture of human tradition. And it is the Christ who lives and breathes under the letter of Scripture who imparts to the simple soul the grace of interpretation.

Externally, the Canon defines the Scripture. This is Carlstadt's distinguishing principle; his book treats "de Canonicis Scripturis." There is an audible protest in it against Luther's subjective principle of judgment, which he afterwards so freely applied, making the authority of a Biblical book depend upon his estimate of its contents, not frankly accepting the contents on the authority of the book. With Carlstadt, on the other hand, the Canon is everything; nor does he seem to see that historically it only represents the gradually formed opinion of the Church, which thus becomes the guarantor of Scripture. With this important limitation, his treatment of the subject is fairly scientific. He goes for information as to what the Canon is to Augustine and to Jerome; nor, considering the doctrinal prepossessions of Wittenberg, is it little to his credit that he chiefly follows the latter. His view is, that while there is a sharp dividing line to be drawn between books that are, and books that are not, included in the Canon (as, for instance, between the Hagiographa and the Apocrypha of the Old Testament), so within the Canon also writings are capable of classification. Taking the well-known division of the Old Testament into Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa, he ventures upon a similar division in the New. First, he places the Gospels; next, thirteen epistles of Paul, the first Epistle of Peter, and the first Epistle of John; and last of all, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of James, the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third Epistles of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Apocalypse. In what class the Acts of the Apostles is to be placed he failed to explain.

Carlstadt's third class plainly corresponds to the "Antilegomena" of the ancient Church; and the books which he places in it stand on a lower level of authority from the conjoint fact that some uncertainty hangs about their authorship, and that they have not always enjoyed universal recognition. But there are evident traces throughout his book of what we

should now call the critical method. He detects signs of various authorship in the Pentateuch, and points out that Moses could not have written the account in Deuteronomy of his own death. He accepts Jerome's reasonable belief that not all the Psalms are the productions of David, in preference to Augustine's absurd theory that those which are ascribed to other poets were written by him in the spirit of prophecy. He follows Jerome and Erasmus in rejecting the last chapter of Mark. But his most remarkable position—one which Luther would have fiercely contested, one which opposes itself to the subsequent course of Protestant thought in this matter —is, that of the three classes of New Testament books the authority of the first is to be preferred to that of the second, the authority of the second to that of the third. On this ground the word of Paul is not to be put on a level with that of Christ. "Oportet enim servos dominis obsequi, atque sicut spiritus Apostoli in carne non fuit par vel major Domino, ita quoque pectus Paulinum sub literis non habet autoritatis tantundem, quantum habet Christus."[1] It is in accord with this principle that an instructed servant of Christ will apply himself to each of these classes of books in order: first to the evangelical, next to the apostolical, lastly to the catholic anonymous. Nor is it altogether inconsistent with his objective method that Carlstadt should find in some Biblical books utterances of surpassing and supreme authority, for these are passages which purport to be the voice and words of God Himself. Plainly the adoption of Carlstadt's principle would have made it impossible for the Reformer to embrace a Pauline theology, except under the condition of finding it in the books of first and greatest authority, the Gospels themselves.

I do not find that Carlstadt's book produced any great effect. Modern critics, looking at it in the light of long subsequent controversy, pronounce it epoch-making; but in truth it made no epoch. The passion and enthusiasm of the Reformation spent themselves in quite different directions: while Carlstadt's aberrations, under the influence of Thomas Münzer and the prophets of Zwickau, which date from 1522,

[1] Carlstadt, *De Canonicis Scripturis*, ed. Credner, § 161.

deprived him of much influence over nascent Protestantism. Yet he had not only thought out the relation of the Bible to religious belief more completely than Luther, but was on the track of a more scientific theory. The time for this controversy had not yet arrived. It was not till ages of gradual education in criticism had forced upon the attention of Europe the literary facts of the Bible, and placed them in their true light, that the question of its authority could be satisfactorily discussed.

In 1520 Luther for the first time drew up a scheme of practical Church reform. It occupies the latter and the larger half of his "Address to the Christian nobility of the German nation on the amendment of the Christian estate" — the nobility including the newly-elected Emperor as their natural head. To them he turned in despair of the clergy: "if God be willing by means of the laity to help His Church, since the clerical order, to whom the business more properly belongs, is become quite indifferent."[1] It is a very precise document, showing that its author had fully apprehended the facts of the case, and deeply sympathised with the feelings of annoyance and indignation against the Church which moved so many of his countrymen. After a brief introduction, in which he describes and undermines the three walls of defence which the Papacy had set up (the principles, first, that the spiritual power is above the temporal; secondly, that no one but the Pope can interpret Scripture; thirdly, that no one can call a council but the Pope), he marshals under twenty-eight heads the articles of reform on which a General Council might with advantage deliberate. These are not set out in logical sequence, or discriminated from each other with anxious care. The Address was written in fiery haste, and was intended much more to move men's indignation and enthusiasm than to furnish "agenda" for any deliberative meeting. Had there been any prospect of such a synod being called together, Luther would no doubt have been prepared with a more exact statement of grievance. In his own eager way, however, he now goes over the whole ground. He demands that the splendour and luxury of the Papal court should be replaced by a simpler

[1] Erl. D. S. vol. xxi. p. 277; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 404 *et seq.*

mode of living, and that the vast crowd of hangers-on at Rome, from the cardinals down to the meanest servant who hopes to be rewarded with a German benefice, shall no longer feed on the spoils of foreign Churches. He would abolish first-fruits, pallia, reservations, commendams, and all the devices by which lucrative patronage is concentrated in the hands of Rome. No cases of conscience should be reserved for Papal decision: all appeals of civil action to Rome should cease. The bishops are no longer to take an oath of allegiance to the Pope, and the Emperor's independence of him is to be acknowledged. Pilgrimages to Rome and masses for the dead are to be abolished; there is to be no more kissing of the Pope's toe; the monastic, and especially the mendicant orders are to be restricted, and priests are to be allowed to marry. The power of the interdict is to be done away, and that of excommunication limited. All festivals save Sunday are to be abolished; there are to be no more indulgences; permissions to eat butter in Lent are no longer to be sold: at one stroke the Canon Law is to be swept away. It was high time, Luther thought, that some terms should be come to with the Bohemians, so that mutual calumny, hatred, and envy should cease. The Church should acknowledge that Hus and Jerome of Prag had been unrighteously and treacherously burned at Constanz, whether they were heretics or not. "Heretics should be overcome with arguments, not by fire: if the latter be the true method, then are the executioners the most learned doctors upon earth."[1] Erudite bishops and doctors—not cardinals or Papal inquisitors—should be sent to Bohemia on a message of reconciliation; and he advises that the Hussites should be allowed to continue their practice of communion in both kinds.

But Luther is much too fearless and too thorough a reformer to confine his criticisms and recommendations to matters of ecclesiastical interest alone. He wishes to abolish mendicancy by instituting something which we should now call a Poor Law. He advocates a sweeping reform of the universities, involving the degradation of Aristotle from his pride of place, and a largely extended study of the Scriptures. In every German town he would set up a girls' school in which

[1] Erl. D. S. vol. xxi. p. 341; Weimar, vol. vi. p. 455.

the maidens should learn to read the Gospel, either in Latin or in their own tongue. He inveighs in burning words against undue splendour in attire; he is strong against usury, or, to speak with more exactness, against lending out money at interest: he thinks that Germany would be better without any foreign trade, which he holds to be the cause of luxury and effeminacy. Excessive eating and drinking was a vice for which Germans were unhappily notorious; nor does he spare the lash. "Last of all," he says,[1] "is it not a lamentable thing that we Christians should have among us free and public brothels, although we are all baptized into chastity?" He cannot think that they are necessary. "If the people of Israel maintained itself without such an abuse, why should not Christian people be able to do as much? Yea, as many towns, markets, villages, hamlets are without such houses, why should not great cities be the same?" "I know very well," he says,[2] at the end of his long list of actual grievances and desirable reforms, "that I have sung a high note, have put forward many things that will be regarded as impossible, have attacked many abuses too fiercely. But what should I have done? It has been laid upon me to say these things: if I could I would also do them. I had rather that the world were angry with me than God: man cannot take from me more than my life."

Animated and strengthened by these principles, and striving towards these practical ends, Luther expected his summons to the Diet of Worms: a new Athanasius, alone, not against the world, but against the Church. But it would be unfair, even at this crisis of his story, to look at the Catholic system only through the medium of his strong and, in the main, justifiable invective. Three centuries and a half have passed away since Protestantism, at the Diet of Augsburg, asserted its right to separate ecclesiastical organisation, and the Catholic Church still exists, almost unimpaired in power and splendour, if no longer able to put forth the old claim to universality. The impartial historian must admit that, however deep and inveterate were the practical corruptions which in part caused

[1] Erl. D. S. vol. xxi. p. 358; [Weimar, vol. vi. p. 467, with editor's note].
[2] *Ibid.* p. 360.

and justified Luther's revolt, she had within her a power of self-reformation, which, in the latter part of the sixteenth century, bore good fruit. Though her type of holiness be not the Protestant, it is one which exercises a powerful attraction over some forms of character, and has a marvellous plastic force: in all ages, even those of her moral degradation, she has been a prolific mother of saints. Many minds, weary of questioning the grounds of faith, gladly take refuge in the arms of authority; her organised piety, her careful discipline, are inexpressibly grateful to spirits that feel themselves incapable of self-guidance; the splendour of her ritual appeals to souls which are best approached through the medium of the senses. Perhaps no Church has completely realised the idea of authority; none has wholly abstained from interference with individual liberty; but the authoritative Church and the voluntary assembly of free men will always continue to exist side by side, each uttering an eternal protest against the other, yet both necessary to supply the various religious wants of mankind. And each, perhaps, answers its end more perfectly because it lives in the presence of the other.

CHAPTER IX

THE DIET OF WORMS

THE Diet of the Holy Roman Empire which was held at Worms in the first months of 1521 is now chiefly memorable as the occasion on which Luther was brought face to face with the Emperor and the Estates, and decisively refused to draw back from the position which he had taken up. But what is to us the central fact of the Diet was to the German princes and cities who took part in it only an episode in its proceedings, though an episode of absorbing interest. It was Charles's first meeting for deliberative and executive purposes with his new subjects. Many questions, both of foreign and domestic policy, loudly cried out for settlement. There was the old difficulty of a "Reichsregiment"—an administrative body which, in the absence of the Emperor, should take charge of the internal affairs of the Empire. The Supreme Court of Justice, which should do right between prince and prince and settle all appeals from inferior tribunals, still waited to be constituted. The Emperor asked for an army, to be furnished in due proportions by the several States, which should form his escort into Italy, when, in pursuance of due precedents, he went to Rome to be crowned. But again, these things, right and necessary as they might be, all cost money: Germany was both unused and unwilling to tax herself; on what principle were the contributions from the several Estates to be assessed, and how was the money to be collected? In short, all the questions which, when Maximilian was a young man, Berthold of Mainz had tried to settle, were still open, and the promised era of national adminis-

tration and organisation had not begun. In the meantime, the Emperor's situation was one of extreme difficulty. In Spain the Commons were in open insurrection against his authority, and his viceroy, Cardinal Adrian of Tortosa, who was maintaining an unequal fight with them, begged for his speedy return to his Peninsular dominions. He was in the utmost straits for money; he had even borrowed 20,000 gulden without interest from Franz von Sickingen.[1] Spain had not yet begun to profit by the discovery of America. In Germany he had inherited little but his grandfather's debts. At the moment of his elevation to what seemed to be the pinnacle of earthly greatness, he was at once hampered by vulgar embarrassments and exposed to grave dangers. But the greatest peril threatened from the side of his unsuccessful competitor for the Empire, Francis I. of France.

It was the old rivalry between France and Burgundy, manifesting itself on a wider field, and with issues that affected the civilised world. Each of the rivals might easily persuade himself that he had a just claim to preponderance in Europe. Francis wielded the whole power of France, now for the first time consolidated into a single State, and was flushed with his recent military success in Italy, which had made him master of the rich duchy of Milan, hitherto a fief of the Empire. On the other hand, Charles added to the hereditary dominions of Austria and Burgundy the kingdoms of Spain and Naples, the prestige of the Empire, and the rapidly fulfilling promise of the Indies. And it was plain that the shock of these rival powers would take place in Italy. Each had already a footing there, more or less firm, and each was eagerly desirous to extend and strengthen his influence. For many years the web of diplomatic intrigue was being woven and pulled to pieces; it had been so when Alexander VI and Julius II filled the fisherman's chair, and the feeble and irresolute Maximilian had been the plaything of their policy. Now the great question was, which side would the Pope take? It was hardly likely that he would wish to have the Papal dominion shut in between the Empire on the north and Charles's Arragonese inheritance on the south. Then Leo was a Florentine and a Medici, and

[1] Ulmann, *Franz v. Sickingen*, p. 163.

therefore not unmindful of the old connection of his house with France; what better thing than to play off the new master of Milan against the old, and so relieve himself of the pressure of an Imperial influence over the whole of Italy? It is true that Charles was in his heart a much truer son of the Church than Francis, and as far as that went, more likely to advance her interests. But throughout the whole course of this tangled history it is instructive to note how small is the part played by the religious convictions of the chief personages in it. If religion can be made a lever for the attainment of any distinct worldly advantage, by all means use it; if not, let it be put aside as one of the inferior motives which no wise man takes into account. It is not the good of the Church which the Pope has in view when he hesitates as to which of the two great rivals he shall support, but the advantage of the Papacy and the interests of the Medicis.

It was thus that the fate of Luther became a matter of European policy. Charles had no sympathy with him either doctrinal or practical. Adrian of Utrecht had brought him up a sound Catholic; and when he saw Luther at Worms he is reported to have said, not without an accent of contempt, "This man will never make a heretic of me."[1] But for the larger interests that were involved, he would have crushed him as remorselessly as most men set their foot upon a worm. Still, Luther was a power in the German land. One great Electoral House protected him. He had friends in all the chief commercial cities. The people everywhere read his sermons and pamphlets eagerly. The feeling against the oppressions and extortions of the Papacy was strong in every class of society from the highest to the lowest; and he was looked upon by many as its representative and embodiment. Already he was excommunicated by the Church; should he also be placed under the ban of the Empire? Charles was willing enough to run the risk of popular discontent in thus making himself the instrument of Papal policy—but it must be upon terms. He had no mind to pleasure the great Italian ally of Francis. If the Pope were willing to ally himself with *him*, and in the great struggle that must come throw the weight of the Papal

[1] Pallavicini, lib. i. cap. 26.

influence into his scale, he would be well content that the suppression of heresy should be one article of the treaty. Such an alliance between Charles and Leo was indeed concluded on the 8th of May 1521; and the Edict of Worms, by which Luther was condemned, was—perhaps by a curious chance—antedated to the same day. But now that diplomacy has revealed to a curious posterity some of her secrets, it is not difficult to see why Luther's fate trembled so long in the balance.

Before we turn to the history of the Diet of Worms it may be the fit time to notice a series of transactions which augmented the already prosperous fortunes of the House of Austria. For the moment Charles was the sole possessor of its many kingdoms and dignities. But the position of his only brother Ferdinand required to be considered. More popular than Charles, he was commonly credited with the possession of greater talents, and it was doubtful how far, at least in the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria, a strict law of primogeniture prevailed. Then there were old treaties of marriage between the Hapsburgs and the Jagellon dynasty in Bohemia and Hungary. When Wladislaus died in 1516, leaving but one feeble son Lewis, only ten years old, and a single daughter Anna, there was plainly room for one of those brilliant marriages on which the prosperity of Austria has been so largely founded. It is needless in this place to recite the negotiations in their chronological order: suffice it to say, that in November 1520 they came to a definite issue. To Lewis was given Maria, a sister of Charles and Ferdinand. On the other hand, Ferdinand was to marry Anna, with expectations of succession to Bohemia and Hungary, which were fulfilled—though against fierce opposition—after the battle of Mohacz in 1526. But the important part of the bargain was that Charles abandoned to his brother all his rights in the five Austrian duchies and their dependent territories. A further expressed intention of elevating these territories into an hereditary kingdom was never fulfilled; but the firm foundation of an Austro-Burgundian House with dominions stretching into Eastern Europe, is an event of capital importance in modern history. And its immediate effect was, at the cost of dividing territories which were too vast and too scattered to have been

easily kept together, to convert Ferdinand from a possible rival into a friend and ally, and, at least as long as Charles lived, to secure the preponderance of their House.[1]

Charles's first care, after his coronation at Aachen, was to satisfy, as far as possible, the claims of the Electors. Into these transactions it is not necessary now to enter. A more important matter was the transference of Würtemberg, from which Duke Ulrich, under circumstances which I have already narrated, had been expelled by the Swabian League, to the Emperor as head of the Austrian house, in exchange for the payment of certain war expenses. By him it was again handed over to Ferdinand, and included in the settlement of his new hereditary dominions. But while this important change in the inner economy of the Empire was being negotiated, Charles was preparing for the Diet. Augsburg was originally named as the place at which it should be held, possibly with the implied suggestion that the Emperor contemplated an immediate expedition into Italy; but as early as the 1st of November it was summoned to meet at Worms. On the 28th of the same month Charles, who in the meantime had been slowly ascending the Rhine, reached that city, there to await the arrival of the Electors and Estates.

Apart from the complications of foreign policy which were looming in the distance, the situation was one of much uncertainty, not to say peril. Society in Germany was stirred to its depths. The discontent which broke out in the Peasants' War only four years afterwards was seething beneath the surface. The lesser nobility, whose political aspirations were represented at the moment by Sickingen and Hutten, felt themselves pressed out of independent existence by the territorial system. The free cities, which were conscious of the same pressure, regarded the Empire as the bulwark of their liberties. The organisation of the common life which was looked for in the institution of a "Reichsregiment," a Supreme Court of Justice, a system of common taxation, amounted to the erection of a new constitution in Germany upon the ruins of old anarchy; while the task was

[1] Ranke, vol. i. p. 357; Baumgarten, *Karl V.* vol. i. p. 376; Rösler, *Kaiserwahl*, p. 20; Bucholtz, *Ferdinand der Erste*, vol. i. pp. 155-158.

rendered difficult, if not impossible, by the jealousies and quarrels of the rival houses, and their determination to yield nothing either to each other or to the common weal. In addition to all this was the profound dissatisfaction felt in Germany at the national relations with Rome, a dissatisfaction which found a voice in "gravamina," which had been presented at many Diets, and were about to confront the Papal Legates at Worms with added vehemence. But the popular heart spoke most of all in Luther. No one else had so fearlessly attacked the abuses which at once saddened and disgusted religious men; no one else had so clearly indicated the only remedy. These were his best days, when he was still making his clear appeal to the spiritual principles which lie at the basis of all religion, and was receiving the reply of the unspoiled conscience. His thoughts had not yet hardened themselves into a logically compacted system, which, like all systems, had its vulnerable points; nor had the fear of those who went further than himself driven him back upon inconsistencies and half truths. As yet he is no rebel against the Church; his appeal is to the fair judgment of a free council: if he is to be a schismatic, he will be driven into schism, only foot by foot, against his will. His principles he cannot give up, because he believes them to be rooted in Scripture and his own apprehension of the truth; but he leaves the issue of them to God, going on his way meanwhile with manly courage. If ever any man expressed for a great nation its best opinion, and gave a voice to its highest aspiration, it was Luther in 1521.

Whether he still entertained hopes of the Emperor's character and intentions we do not know; Aleander put his faith in princes with much more justification. Charles was not yet twenty-one, a silent, somewhat backward young man, who had up to this time given no proof, except such as is implied in political industry, of the talents which he undoubtedly possessed. Chièvres, who held an entire ascendency over him, was still his chief minister, a statesman who, next to the aggrandisement of his own family, turned his chief attention to the maintenance of the French alliance. Charles's chancellor was Mercurino Gattinara, one of those astute Italians

who were the *condottiere* of statesmanship, ready to take service at any court, without reference to patriotic or dynastic considerations. But this very fact often gave them a certain breadth and flexibility of mind which emancipated them from partial views: it was Gattinara's distinction among Charles's advisers to be the constant advocate of a council of the Church. Naturally, with a pious Emperor, the confessor played a considerable part: this was Glapion, a Franciscan of Maine, educated at the Sorbonne, and afterwards superior of a convent at Bruges. Our authentic knowledge of him is not large; soon we shall see him, whether sincerely or not it is hard to say, attempting to reconcile Luther with the Holy See; not improbably he was the advocate of a reformation after the Spanish model—disciplinary without being doctrinal. Among other ecclesiastics who stood near the Emperor were Ludovico Marliano, Bishop of Tuy, a friend and correspondent of Erasmus, and royal physician; Pedro Ruiz de la Mota, Bishop of Palencia, a Spaniard of much literary cultivation, who had excited the hatred of his countrymen by making himself the instrument of Chièvres's policy; Eberhard von der Mark, Bishop of Liège, the author of the vigorous remonstrance against the oppressions and exactions of the Holy See, presented to the Diet of Augsburg in the summer of 1518, a document the responsibility for which he now repudiated; and last of all Matthias Lang, Cardinal Archbishop of Salzburg, a statesman who had served in turn Frederick III and Maximilian, caring nothing for the Church except as a tool of policy. The influence of none of these promised much for the cause of Luther. Nor is there any reason to suppose that Charles ever wavered in his determination to put down the new movement, however he might be temporarily diverted from his purpose by reasons of policy. Immediately after his election to the Empire he wrote to Francis I. (August 3d, 1519), "that no advancement of his will ever diminish his anxiety for their mutual amity and the peace of Christendom; and as his correspondent has more power than any other in this respect, he should hold the first place in the extirpation of heresy." In a remarkable despatch written to his aunt, the Governor of the Netherlands, in March 1519, he states as his "chief object" "the exaltation

and increase of our Holy Catholic faith." We shall find him in the spring of 1521 defending the severity of the Spanish Inquisition against the Pope himself. If sometimes he seems to lean for a moment to the other side, the secret is revealed in a letter which his ambassador Juan Manuel addressed to him from Rome in May 1519, recommending that "when he came to Germany he should show some favour to a certain monk, named Brother Martin, which, as the Pope was extraordinarily afraid of him, would be a good way to compel his Holiness to an alliance." [1]

The ancient and famous city of Worms has long since fallen from its high estate. Of mediæval Worms all that is left is the great Minster, a mountain of red sandstone, whose eastern apse rises in tier upon tier of Romanesque arcades, and whose lofty towers and twin domes catch the last rays of the setting sun. If not the Minster of the Nibelungenlied, it probably stands on its site; it is impossible to believe that Luther did not worship there at the crisis of his own fate, while under its roof the edict which condemned him was signed. But Worms, which had suffered severely in the Thirty Years' War, was reduced to a heap of ashes by Lewis XIV, and, though rebuilt when the storm was overpassed, has never recovered its ancient size and splendour. But at the moment of which I am speaking it was the political centre of Europe. Electors, princes, prelates, nobles, representatives of free cities were gathering from all Germany to do honour to the new Emperor, and to take part in the transaction of Imperial business of the greatest moment. Every day saw the arrival of some new potentate; the Elector of Saxony came on the 6th of January; Duke Henry of Brunswick on the 7th; the Elector Palatine on the 8th; Philip of Hesse rode in on the 22d, with an escort of six hundred horsemen; the Elector of Brandenburg did not come till February 7th, when the Diet was already opened. The English and French ambassadors were there; the two Papal nuncios, Caracciolo and Aleander; representatives of the Kings of Hungary and Poland; accredited

[1] Brewer, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII.* vol. iii. pt. i. pp. 148-378; Brieger, *Aleander und Luther*, 1521, pp. 79-87; Baumgarten, vol. i. pp. 138, 339, 390, 321.

only, who, if he perseveres as he has begun, will carry everything according to our wishes, and will give peace to the Church."[1] The Spaniards who surround Charles are like-minded with him, the only exception being "the merchants suspected of Moorish descent (Marani), who in Antwerp and elsewhere favour Martin, because he has said that neither heretics nor any one else ought to be burned."[2] On the other hand, the Archbishop of Mainz, though faithful to the Church, is timid, being surrounded by a crowd of crypto-Lutheran councillors, who, professing to be orthodox, do all they can for the heretical cause.[3] But among the Germans generally Aleander is forced to acknowledge that he should fare badly. Against him he had a legion of poor nobles, with Hutten at their head, "thirsting for the blood of the clergy." The lawyers and canonists are all most manifest Lutherans,—and worse than these, "the race of grammarians and poets, whereof Germany is full."[4] He notes it as "a great and incredible miracle," that there are monks of other orders than Luther's who favour him; indeed all the clergy, except the Rectors of the parochial churches, are above measure infected, and the worst of all are those that have been promoted by Rome. Everywhere the common people are more or less on the same side, especially at Mainz and Worms, a fact for which the unfortunate Nuncio is obliged to take consolation in an old inscription to the effect that "Maguntia ab antiquo nequam."[5] "At present," he writes on the 8th of February, "all Germany is in commotion: nine out of every ten cry 'Luther,' and the tenth, if he do not care for what Luther says, at least cries, 'Death to the Court of Rome!' and every one demands and shrieks 'Council! Council!' and will have it in Germany; and those who ought to do most for us, yea for themselves, some out of timidity, some for despite, others, each for his own interest."[6]

Aleander's instructions were quite explicit.[7] He was to demand the burning of Luther's books. He was to ask that the heretic himself should be sent to Rome for condign punishment. The case was concluded, Rome had spoken: no Diet,

[1] Brieger, p. 27. [2] *Ibid.* p. 25. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.* pp. 27, 28.
[5] *Ibid.* p. 30. [6] *Ibid.* p. 48. [7] Balan, pp. 7, 8.

or other assembly of laymen had any power to hear or to try Luther; all that remained was that the sentence of the Church should be executed. Up to the time of which I am speaking the burning of the books had been successfully accomplished. Charles had issued an order to that effect in his Burgundian dominions, and Köln and Mainz, as we have seen, had followed the example of Louvain.[1] But when Aleander wanted to go farther than this he was met by a difficulty. It was an article of the "capitulation" which Charles had signed after his election that no German of high or low degree should be placed, unheard, under the ban of the Empire. Here there was a decisive conflict of principle. Aleander's contention was, that all necessary trial had already taken place, that to the Pope belonged the condemnation of heretics, to Princes only the execution of the sentence at the instance of the Holy See; and above all, that Luther's writings spoke for themselves. Besides, he was astute enough to perceive that there were other matters in dispute between Emperor and Pope, and that Luther, once at Worms and allowed to speak for himself, might become an important factor in the negotiations. These views Aleander put forward in a council held, under the presidency of the Archbishop of Salzburg, in the early days of December. He made a long speech, full on the one hand of citations from Luther's works, and on the other of hostile dicta of the Fathers. But the council would not take the desired action. The Archbishop of Mainz, who was also Chancellor of the Empire, had not yet arrived, and without him nothing could be done.[2]

[1] Aleander (Brieger, p. 19) makes this statement explicitly. "Haveva impetrato, ut scripseram, a Lovanio da Cesare un mandato per tutti suoi dominii, terre et regni contra li libri di Frà Martino Luther et di tutti altri, che havessero scritto mal di Nostro Signore o della Sancta Sede Apostolica, *qual mandato ho sempre appresso di me.*" Baumgarten in the first volume of his *Karl V* (p. 343) accepts this statement, while in the second (p. 110 *note*) he withdraws it, on the double ground, first, that no trace of the document has been found in the Belgian archives, and second, that "the language of the mandate of the 22d March implies that this was the first edict against Luther, valid in the Netherlands, issued by the Emperor." He further supposes that Aleander had been deceived by a promise first fulfilled six months later, against which the words which I have italicised are surely conclusive. The burning of his books at Köln and Louvain, to which Luther alludes on the 28th November 1520 (De Wette, vol. i. p. 527), most likely took place in consequence of the academical sentence passed upon them by these Universities.

[2] Kolde, *Luther's Stellung*, etc. p. 92. Brieger, pp. 19, 20, 21, 36, 37.

In the meantime the assembling of the Diet was watched with the deepest interest at Wittenberg. So long ago as when the Elector Frederick was kept at Köln by the gout, at the time of the coronation at Aachen, he had requested of two of Charles's chief councillors, Chièvres and Henry of Nassau, that no proceedings should be taken against Luther until he had been fairly heard.[1] On the 28th of November the Emperor wrote from Oppenheim a letter to the Elector (which, however, did not reach him till the third week in December), in which he asked him to bring Luther to Worms, where his case should be heard by learned and understanding persons, and nothing should happen to him contrary to right. But the letter also contained a stipulation that in the meantime the accused should write nothing against the Holy See. Frederick answered in some dudgeon, complaining that Luther's books had been already burned within the limits of the Empire, and repudiating all responsibility for what his Professor might write. And indeed, when we recollect that the burning of the Bull took place at Wittenberg on the 10th of December, and that the Elector then knew of it, it is easy to see why he should define his position towards the bold heretic with the utmost caution, and should ask to be excused from bringing him to Worms. But in the meantime Charles had changed his mind. The reason may have been some turn in the ever-eddying current of Italian politics. The Pope was coquetting with Francis, and levying an army of Swiss mercenaries; might it not be well to reserve Luther's case as an obvious weapon of offence? On the other hand, the Cortes of Arragon had obtained from the Pope some relaxation of the hold of the Inquisition upon that country—a proceeding to which Charles, who found the holy office a convenient instrument of autocratic government, gravely objected. Leo withdrew his boon to Arragon on the 12th of December; Charles changed his mind about Luther on the 17th. Was this only a coincidence? In any case, Charles wrote a letter from Worms, dated December 17th, which crossed the Elector's, revoking his former request. He had now learned, he said, that Luther was excommunicate, that an interdict was proclaimed against all places that

[1] Tentzel, vol. i. p. 482.

harboured him, and that consequently Worms, where the Estates of the Empire were assembled, was no fit place for him. But if he would recant, the Elector might bring him, not to Worms, but to Frankfurt, or some other convenient place, and leave him there till some further determination was taken. To which the Elector replied, with all respect, that he was already half-way to Worms, where he hoped to speak face to face with the Emperor, and the correspondence dropped.[1]

Spalatin, who seems to have kept Luther informed of these negotiations, wrote to ask him what he would do if summoned before the Emperor. He replied on the 21st of December, eleven days after the burning of the Bull, that he would be carried to Worms ill if he could not go well. "For it is not permitted me to doubt that if Caesar calls me I am called by the Lord. Further, if they intend violence, as is very likely (for they do not care to summon me that they may learn anything), my case is to be commended to the Lord. The same Lord lives and reigns who preserved the three youths in the furnace of the king of Babylon, and if He does not choose to preserve me, my head is a small thing in comparison with Christ, who was slain with the utmost ignominy, to the scandal of all and the destruction of many. For here we are not to take account either of risk or of safety; what, on the other hand, we have to care for is, that we should not abandon the Gospel, which we have once begun to preach, as a sport to the impious, and give our adversaries wherewith to glory against us, because we dare not confess what we have taught, and fear to shed our blood for it—which cowardice from us, which boasting from them, may Christ avert. Amen." In another passage of the same noble letter he says, "One only duty is left to our care, namely, to pray God that Charles's rule should, in the protection of impiety, not imbrue its first actions in mine or any other's blood; and I would prefer, as I have often said, to perish at the hands of the Romanists alone, rather than that he and his should be involved in this matter. You know what wretchedness followed the Emperor Sigismund after the murder of Hus, how he never had any pros-

[1] Tentzel, vol. i. p. 484; Walch, vol. xv. pp. 2027-2029; Waltz, *Der Wormser Reichstag*, in *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte*, vol. viii. p. 26.

perity afterwards, and died without offspring; and his daughter's son, Ladislaus, perished, and in a single generation their name was blotted out; while his wife, Barbara, the infamy of queens, eloped, and other things which I believe you know. If, therefore, it must needs be that I should be delivered into the hands of both the prelates and the peoples, the will of the Lord be done. Lo, here you have my mind and counsel. You may expect of me anything save flight and recantation. I will not fly, much less recant. So may the Lord Jesus Christ strengthen me. For neither can be done without peril of piety and of the salvation of many."[1]

So far as we are able to date Aleander's despatches, which are our best authority for what went on at Worms, they fail us from about the 18th of December till the 6th of February. In the meantime the Diet was formally opened on Sunday, January 27th, after a solemn mass sung in the Minster by the Cardinal of Sitten, in presence of the Emperor and five Electors. There is, however, no reason to suppose that during this time the Papal agent was idle. A new and sharper Bull of Excommunication was issued on the 3d of January, in which Hutten, Pirckheimer, and Spengler were coupled with Luther as his chief accomplices in heresy; and on the 18th of the same month a Brief was addressed to the Emperor reminding him of his duty, and exhorting him to do it. At the same time we find Aleander imploring the Papal court to be a little more careful in the matter of reservations and the like, so as not further to stir up the angry feeling in Germany; while he asked for and received money to grease the itching palms of secretaries and chamberlains. What he was anxious for was that Charles should take the matter into his own hands, and, without waiting for the Diet, issue a mandate against Luther. The precise course of proceeding we do not know. Aleander, in a despatch dated February 27th, alludes to some such resolution taken on the 29th of December, which was not carried into execution owing to the timidity of the Archbishop of Mainz. Again, on the 16th of January, the Elector of Saxony writes to his brother, that he has heard of machinations among "the red hats and the Romans and

[1] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 534-536.

their following,"[1] with the intent of putting Luther under the ban, and persecuting him to the utmost. Nor does there seem to be any doubt that Charles was quite willing to take this course. He was prompted to it by his own natural disposition, and the influence of the counsellors on whom he most relied worked in the same direction. Two considerations, however, may be alleged as having probably weighed with him against it. The time had not yet come at which a clear understanding with Leo in regard to Italian affairs made co-operation in matters of faith easy and desirable. And the temper of the princes who were gradually assembling at Worms, some, friends of Luther's, all full of the German grievances against the Papacy, was not such as to encourage arbitrary measures against one whom the people loved and looked up to as their champion.[2]

We must pause at this point to trace the course of a singular movement, beneath the surface of politics, which, though it came to nothing, is of the highest interest, as throwing a new and unexpected light upon the motives and ideas of some of the chief actors in the drama. In the early days of February, and therefore before the first steps were taken for laying the affair of Luther before the Diet, Glapion, the Emperor's confessor, held repeated private conferences with Brück, Elector Frederick's chancellor, and one of his most trusted counsellors. He was anxious to see Frederick himself, but the latter, refusing to abandon his position of apparent neutrality, referred the matter to his chancellor, whose reports of the conference are still extant. From which side the overtures were originally made, there is no direct evidence to show; but the whole tone and course of the negotiations seem to prove that the interview was sought by Glapion. The Franciscan began by expressing his admiration of much that Luther had written; he had perceived "a noble growth springing up from Luther's heart," from which might be expected useful fruits for the Church. But all this had been changed by the publication of the book *Of the Babylonian Captivity*, which had made him feel "as if he had been

[1] Förstemann, *Neues Urkundenbuch*, p. 5.

[2] Brewer, vol. i. p. 428 *note*; Förstemann, p. 27; Balan, pp. 17, 34; Brieger, p. 75.

scourged and pommelled from head to foot." Indeed he would not believe that it was Brother Martin's until he had acknowledged it. Neither style nor manner was his; if he had written it, he could only suppose that it was under the impulse of anger against the Bull which had condemned him. In defence of this position he adduced certain articles, taken from the *Babylonian Captivity*, which he afterwards put into writing. He acutely seized upon the weak point of Luther's system; "the Bible," he said, "was a book like soft wax, which every man could twist and stretch according to his own pleasure." He even went so far as to associate the Emperor with himself. Charles, too, had been pleased with Luther's earlier writings, and had wished that such a man could be reconciled with the Church. He admitted that there was great need of a reformation; had Luther confined himself to exposing the abuses connected with indulgences and the administration of the sacraments, his conduct would have been laudable, and but few learned men would have disagreed with him. He himself had not shunned to communicate his opinions to his Imperial penitent. "I have already said to his Majesty, that God will punish him and all Princes, if they do not free the Church from such overweening abuses." He declared further that he had said to Caesar that this man Martin had been sent by God, and that it had been enjoined upon him to curse men, and to be a scourge to them, for their sins' sake. Let Charles be Emperor for only five years, and the world would see what he would accomplish in the way of reformation. In brief, he felt that a great opportunity for the Church was being lost; "thereupon the Father answered and said with a deep sigh, God knew that what he had done in this matter had been done of pure, genuine goodwill, and not at any man's suggestion, but of his own motion, that the happy issue of which he had before spoken much with me might not be frustrated, and the noble wares and merchandise, which Dr. Luther had now almost brought to land and into port, might not be cast into the sea." This, and much more of the same kind, all directed towards the revocation by Luther of the obnoxious articles taken from the *Babylonian Captivity*, and accompanied by many assertions, that even now,

after the publication of the Bull, a way to reconciliation with the Holy See was yet open, made up Glapion's strange communication.[1]

Nothing came of the invitation to Luther to recant. If I rightly interpret letters which, on or about the 19th of March, he wrote to Spalatin and the Elector, Glapion's propositions were laid before him only to be promptly rejected. The intellectual and moral opposition between the Reformer and the Holy See remained as sharp as it had been before. But in what spirit, in what interest were these propositions made? Some historians, following the lead of Hutten, look upon Glapion as a double-tongued intriguer, whose only object was to delude Luther into an abandonment of the position which he had hitherto consistently held. In all probability he was an astute negotiator, neither inclined to show his cards nor careful to exhibit an exact veracity: it is very difficult to believe that Charles had ever expressed approval of any of Luther's books; while Erasmus describes Glapion as a man to whom he should not dare to open his whole heart, and with whom Hutten might live for ten years without knowing. On the other hand, the legate and the confessor were on the best terms. Aleander flattered himself that he had secured Glapion by certain honeyed words from the Holy See; while Glapion had produced an excellent effect upon the mind of Aleander by asking for four hundred copies of the Bull against Luther, for distribution among monks of his own order. May not this intrigue have been a bold attempt on the part of one who, though not highly placed in the Church, felt that he had the ear of Majesty, to repair the errors of the game as it had been hitherto played, and to convert Luther from an enemy into a useful instrument of the Holy See? What if Glapion, recognising the ecclesiastical abuses under which Germany groaned, and recollecting the schedule of "gravamina," which, whatever became of Luther's affair, was to be presented to the Legate by the Diet, desired to turn the whole current of excited feeling in the direction of a disciplinary reformation? Such a reformation had already been carried out in Spain, the most orthodox of Christian countries;

[1] Förstemann, pp. 36-54.

such a reformation was destined to be the work of the Council of Trent. Would Luther but abandon the position of doctrinal revolt, and confine the thunder of his eloquence to practical abuses, in regard to which all good men were at one, a reformation might be wrought in the Church, and at the same time her bleeding wounds be healed. The plan failed at the moment of its first inception; but had it not been shattered against the firm resolution of Luther, it would have been shipwrecked on the invincible ignorance, the engrained corruption of the court of Rome.[1]

Greatly, therefore, to Aleander's dissatisfaction, Luther's affair was referred to the Diet. He was sure of the Emperor and his Spanish and Flemish advisers; while it was only too doubtful what would be the issue of the matter in an assembly where the rank and character of the Elector Frederick counted for much. A mandate against Luther and his books was accordingly prepared,[2] and Aleander was requested by the Emperor to bring the whole Papal case before the Diet. This he did on Ash Wednesday, February 13th, in a speech of three hours' duration, in which, though he had had only a single day for preparation, he acquitted himself much to his own satisfaction. The Estates promised their answer on the following Saturday. But the debate lasted for seven days, becoming hotter as it went on: men said that the Electors of Saxony and of Brandenburg almost came to blows. "The monk," reports the Frankfurt envoy on the 20th of February,[3] "makes a great coil: some would willingly nail him to the cross; I fear he will hardly escape them; but care must be taken, if it happen, that he does not rise again the third day."

[1] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 574, 575; *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. ii. pp. 210, 287; Brieger, pp. 39, 63. Some historians, especially Maurenbrecher (*Studien u. Skizzen*, pp. 258 - 261; *Gesch. d. Kath. Reformation*, vol. i. p. 186 *et seq.*), have attempted to connect Erasmus with these events, and to represent him as the adviser and prompter of Glapion. That the confessor, to a considerable extent, represented what we know to have been Erasmus's ideas is indubitable; but I can find no positive evidence which implicates Erasmus in the transaction. In the *Spongia* he says in explicit terms: "Quid ille (*i.e.* Glapion) molitus sit aut peregerit in Lutherum nescio: certe quicquid hujus fecit, non meo fecit impulsu." *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. ii. p. 287.

[2] We have the draft of this mandate in two forms. Förstemann, pp. 55-58.

[3] Some extracts from the reports of the Frankfurt envoy to his employers are printed in the appendix to Steitz, *Die Melanchthon-und Lutherherbergen zu Frankfurt am Main*, p. 47.

In the Electoral College the three Archbishops and Brandenburg hung together, while Saxony and the Palatine took the other side. If Aleander is to be trusted, many of the princes of the second class threw in their votes with the majority; at all events, a common answer to the Emperor was agreed upon. After a recognition of the Emperor's Christian disposition and industry in the matter, the Estates went on to remind him that as Luther had made so deep an impression on the minds of the common people in Germany, it might be well to consider the consequences of proceeding strongly against him by mandate, without giving him the opportunity of being heard in his own defence. They advise, therefore, that he shall be sent for under safe-conduct, and that he should be asked (but in no case should be disputed with) whether he confesses himself the author of the published writings and articles against the holy Christian faith, which, up to this time, they and their forefathers had held, and whether he stands to them or not. Should he recant, then let him be forthwith interrogated on other points, and let what is convenient be done. But if, on the contrary, he should persist in affirming things contrary to Holy Church and Christian faith, then will the Electors, Princes, and Estates, without further disputation, abide by the same, and assent to the publication throughout the Empire of his Majesty's fit and needful mandate. And the answer concludes with a request that the Emperor will consider the oppressions and abuses of the Holy See under which Germany lies, and take steps for the remedy of the same.[1]

To this answer of the Estates Charles made a formal reply, in which he promised due attention to the "gravamina," and proceeded to summon Luther to Worms. He would willingly have substituted the Elector's safe-conduct for his own, but Frederick, true to his policy of caution, not only insisted that the responsibility should lie with the Emperor, but left Luther entirely free to obey the summons or not, as he pleased. Charles's letter, dated March 6th, though not actually despatched till the 15th, was a somewhat remarkable document. Signed by the Archbishop of Mainz, in compliance with the

[1] Balan, p. 59; Brieger, pp. 59-61, 70; Steitz, p. 47; Förstemann, pp. 57 *seq.* Conf. Aleander's version of this answer, Brieger, p. 70.

Emperor's command, and addressed to an excommunicated heretic, it qualified him as "honourable, beloved, pious." It simply summoned him to put himself under the escort of the messenger sent, and to come to Worms to give an account to Emperor and Diet of his books and doctrines. The herald, Caspar Sturm, officially known as Deutschland, set out from Worms on the 15th of March, the bearer to Wittenberg of safe-conducts, not only from the Emperor, but from the Elector and his brother, and even from Duke George. Needless to say, Aleander was vehemently averse to these proceedings, and still more to their courteous and judicial form. He begged in vain that Luther when he came should be consigned to the honourable durance of the royal palace, where restrictions could be placed on his intercourse with his friends. But indeed, Charles, with the best will in the world to please him, had little choice in the matter. It was one of the moments at which the political outlook was black; war with France seemed imminent; the news from Spain was daily more disquieting; and he could not afford to put himself in opposition to the Estates of the Empire. One thing, however, he did. On the 27th of March an Imperial mandate, dated March 10th, was published at Worms, calling upon all people everywhere to give up to the lawful authorities whatever books of Luther's they might have in their possession.[1]

The months which elapsed between the burning of the Bull at Wittenberg, December 10th, 1520, and Luther's departure for Worms, April 2d, 1521, were for him a period of ceaseless literary activity. He was, as we have seen, more than willing to obey the summons of the Emperor; but no feeling that the crisis of his life was at hand interrupted for a moment his usual avocations. On the 25th of January he sent to the Elector a copy of the letter which he had written to Charles V in the August of the preceding year, with a view of its securely reaching the Emperor's hands.[2] But the communication of the arch-heretic was treated with truly Imperial scorn; Charles tore it across in face of the Diet, and threw the pieces

[1] Balan, p. 117; Förstemann, pp. 13, 14; Brieger, p. 141; Walch, vol. xv. p. 2122.

[2] De Wette, vol. i. p. 549; *vide supra*, p. 362.

upon the ground.[1] For the rest, Luther worked and waited. It was in these months that he finished the *Book of Postills*,[2] which the Elector had asked for, perhaps in the vain hope of withdrawing him from controversy, and published the *Exposition of the Magnificat*, dedicated to Prince John Frederick. He was still working upon his *Exposition of the Psalms*. He printed in February a short pamphlet entitled *An Instruction to Penitents with regard to the Forbidden Books*, in which he advised those who were threatened with refusal of absolution for having his works in their possession to stand out stoutly against their confessors.[3] The controversy with Emser, to which I have before alluded, was still going on in a series of pamphlets, which were much more outspoken than polite. In one of them Luther dealt a side blow at Thomas Murner, a Franciscan monk of Alsace, belonging to the school of Geiler and Brandt, who had attacked the treatise on the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and then swiftly followed up the assault by four pamphlets, in which, with growing vehemence, he controverted Luther's characteristic principles.[4] A more serious controversy, which, however, went over the old ground in much the old way, was with Ambrosius Catharinus, a Roman theologian, again a Dominican and a Thomist, who, at the end of 1520, dedicated to the Emperor a book *Against the Impious and very Pestiferous Doctrines of Martin Luther*. Luther received the book a little before the 7th of March, and on the 1st of April his answer, dedicated to his old friend, Wenzel Link, was ready.[5] Last of all, I may mention a book in which the close alliance between Luther and Lucas Cranach, the painter of Wittenberg, was first made public. This was the *Passional of Christ and Antichrist*, a series of twenty-six woodcuts, in which Christ and the Pope are exhibited in sharpest antithesis. The designs were by Cranach; the explanations, though anonymous, by Luther. On the 7th of March the latter writes to Spalatin, "Lucas has bidden me

[1] Brieger, p. 55; Pallavicini, lib. i. cap. 26, § 1.

[2] The date of the dedication is March 3d. De Wette, vol. i. p. 563.

[3] De Wette, vol. i. p. 560; Erl. D. S. vol. xxiv. p. 204.

[4] Schmidt, *Histoire Littéraire de l'Alsace*, vol. ii. pp. 239, 240; Kolde, *Analecta Lutherana*, p. 26; De Wette, vol. i. p. 542.

[5] Erl. *Opp. Lat.* vol. v. p. 286; De Wette, vol. i. pp. 569, 570, 582.

write under these pictures, and send them to thee; thou wilt have a care of them. Now is exhibited the opposition between Christ and the Pope, set out in figures; a good book, and one for the laity."[1]

The day on which Luther was bidden to present himself before the Emperor in Worms was the 16th of April. He set out from Wittenberg on the 2d. The party consisted of four persons: Luther himself, his intimate friend Nicholas von Amsdorf, a young Pomeranian nobleman, Peter Swaven, at that time a student at Wittenberg, and an Augustinian monk, John Petzensteiner, whom he took with him in obedience to the rule of his order, that monks should travel two and two. Justus Jonas, who had just succeeded Henning Goede as Provost of the Castle Church at Wittenberg, joined them at Erfurt; Schurf, who was to act as his legal adviser, was already at Worms. The herald, Deutschland, rode ahead, displaying his insignia; the four travellers followed in a covered carriage, which, with its horses, was supplied by the municipality of Wittenberg. On the same day they came to Leipzig, where Luther was honoured with the customary present of wine; on the 3d to Naumburg, where a certain priest, if we may trust Mathesius, sent him a portrait of Savonarola, with an exhortation to stand fast in the truth, in which case God would be with him; Weimar, where at that time Duke John was holding his court, was the next halting-place. Here Luther was sure of the friendliest reception; he rested a day, preached, and was sent on his way with unabated courage and renewed funds.[2]

The journey thence to Worms was much more like a triumphal progress than the conduct of a state criminal to be tried by the highest tribunal in the land. "Whenever he entered a city," says Myconius, "the people flocked to meet him outside the gates, to gaze upon the wonderful man who was so bold as to set himself against the Pope and all who in opposition to Christ look upon the Pope as a god."[3] But it was at Erfurt, where Luther had spent so many eventful years,

[1] De Wette, vol. i. p. 571; Erl. D. S. vol. lxiii. p. 240; Lindau, *Lucas Cranach*, p. 172.

[2] De Wette, vol. i. pp. 586, 587; Mathesius, p. 23 B; Förstemann, p. 68; Spalatin's *Annales*, p. 39.

[3] Myconius, p. 38.

that his triumph was to culminate. In a letter written before he left Wittenberg, he had announced his coming to John Lang, now the Prior of his old convent. Crotus Rubianus, who more than any one else was secretly responsible for the *Letters of the Obscure Men*, and was one of the strongest links between the party of the Poets and that of the Reformers, was Rector of the University. In conjunction with Eoban Hess and others like-minded he resolved to give Luther the most splendid and joyful reception. When, on the 6th of April, the humble cavalcade reached the boundary of the Erfurt territory, it was met by Crotus, attended by forty horsemen and a great crowd on foot. The Rector addressed his old friend in an enthusiastic oration, Hess added a few stammering words of ecstatic welcome, and then the multitude escorted Luther back to the city, where the crowded streets and walls and roofs, full of rejoicing people, testified to the universal excitement. Luther alighted at the Augustinian convent, where his old teacher, Arnoldi von Usingen, gave him but a cold reception, which was, however, more than made up for by the warm welcome of the Prior. Next day, the Sunday *quasimodogeniti*, he preached in the Augustinian church on the Gospel of the day (John xx. 19-31) to an overflowing congregation. It was characteristic of the man that he said not a word of himself, or of the peril in which he stood, but preached with simple earnestness his central doctrine of justification by faith alone.[1]

Luther remained two days in Erfurt. City and University vied with each other in doing him honour: the latter invited him to a solemn banquet: the former gave him, when he went away, the city captain, Hermann von Hoff, as a guide and protector. Crotus would willingly have accompanied him to Worms, but his dignified office forbade him to leave Erfurt: all he could do was to accompany his friend for some miles, when he left him with an exhortation to steadfastness. Eoban's facile muse was greatly excited by these events, which for the last time gave public witness to the union between the Poets of Erfurt and the Reformer who had gone out from among them. Seven elegies are to be found in his works, bearing the general

[1] Kampschulte, vol. ii. p. 95 *seq.*; Lingke, *Reisegeschichte*, pp. 88, 89; Erl. Krause, *Eoban Hess*, vol. i. p. 322 *seq.*; D. S. vol. xvi. p. 249.

title, "In Evangelici Doctoris M. Lutheri laudem defensionemque." The subject of the first and second is Luther's entrance into Erfurt; of the third, his sermon in the Augustinian church; of the fourth, his departure from Erfurt; the fifth is addressed to Justus Jonas on his return from Worms; the sixth to Hutten, exhorting him to rally to the side of Luther; while the seventh and last is an invective against Emser. Eoban's faculty of turning out verses was so great, his enthusiasm so readily awakened by a new cause, that his personal adhesion perhaps weighed little for Luther. But he was the most distinguished poet of his day, a man whom his contemporaries thought sure of immortality, and the undisputed representative of the literary life of Erfurt. And all this meant that Luther went to Worms carrying with him the suffrages of the newly-awakened learning and literature of Germany.[1]

From Erfurt his farther way took him through Gotha, where he again preached, to Eisenach. Here a violent attack of illness compelled him to have recourse to blood-letting, but hardly delayed his journey. He arrived at Frankfurt on the 14th of April, leaving it on the 15th for Oppenheim, the last stage before Worms, and a town on the same bank of the Rhine. Here, had it not been for his own clear-sighted resolution, he would have been involved in a web of intrigue which might have endangered his whole position. The story is one which I must tell at some length.[2]

The Ebernburg, Franz von Sickingen's hill fortress, lay not far from Oppenheim, and, therefore, at no great distance from Worms. Its master was there watching the Diet from his point of vantage, and with him Hutten and Martin Butzer (better known as Bucer), an ex-Dominican monk, destined to play a not undistinguished part in both the German and the English Reformations. Everything said or done at Worms was known within a few hours on the Ebernburg, to which many men's eyes were anxiously turned as they recollected Hutten's avowed projects of revolution, and Sickingen's power of translating them into action. And hence, in March, a series of violent missives began to pour in upon the Imperial

[1] Reprinted in *Opp. Helii Eobani Hessi farragines duae*, f. ii. 116 *et seq.*
[2] Myconius, p. 38.

party in Worms. Hutten's first "invective," as he called it, was addressed to Aleander, upon occasion of his three hours' speech on Ash Wednesday. Others followed, to Caracciolo, to the Archbishop of Mainz, to the assembled Bishops, to the Emperor. They were written in his usual fiery style; and their threats and denunciations, backed as they were by a certain undefined power, produced a considerable effect upon the minds of Charles's counsellors. It was accordingly resolved to treat with the enemy, and to send to the Ebernburg Armstorff, an Imperial chamberlain, who had been Sickingen's companion in the Würtemberg war, and with him Glapion. Armstorff's mission was simply to bribe Hutten to silence. He had been in the receipt of an annual pension of 200 florins ever since the Würtemberg campaign; this was now to be doubled. Aleander did not believe in the success of the mission; he thought that Hutten would not take 4000 to do what was asked of him. But he was mistaken, Hutten did not refuse the golden bait, while, as for Sickingen, he already, as we have seen, stood in the closest relations with the Emperor, and was expecting to find employment for his lanzknechts in the impending French war. It was almost absurd to see how the thunder-cloud of revolution which had been long hanging over Germany passed harmlessly away. Henceforth Hutten's big words were appraised at their full value: as Erasmus characteristically said: "People should not threaten who have not the means of carrying their threats into effect."[1]

But what was Glapion's share in the transaction? It is very difficult to pierce the obscurity in which this intrigue is shrouded; all the evidence within our reach is comprised in a chance word in a despatch, an occasional hint in a letter. But Glapion appears to have played with Sickingen and Hutten and Bucer the same game as he had played with Brück, though probably with a purpose at once more mixed and more subtle. He endeavoured to win them over to a plan of Church reformation which was not Luther's. He frankly admitted the services which Luther had rendered to the Church, though he pointed out, or pretended to point out, to Sickingen that he

[1] *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, vol. ii. p. 12 *et seq.*; Strauss, *U. v. H.* p. 423 *seq.*; Brieger, pp. 122, 124; *Erasmi Opp.* vol. iii. p. 669 E.

had not always said the same things in his Latin and in his German works. He probably talked nonsense about the Emperor's view of things, as he had done to Brück, nonsense which Hutten and Sickingen, who had always been fervent Imperialists, were prompt to believe, and which fell in with Bucer's natural genius for negotiation and compromise. In brief, we can dimly see the outlines of a great reconciling combination, in which on the one hand the Emperor and the revolutionaries, on the other Luther and the Churchmen, were to unite upon a plan of peaceful reformation. It was with some such view as this that Bucer was sent down to Oppenheim to intercept Luther, to lay before him in strong language the dangers that awaited him at Worms, and to beg him to go up to the Ebernburg to confer with Glapion. Whether some deeper treachery was not intended on the part of the confessor must remain doubtful. Luther reached Oppenheim on the 15th of April; on the 16th his safe-conduct expired, and he must present himself in Worms; might not the consequence of the delay that was suggested to him be, that he would find himself by his own action bare of all official protection? Nor was it only an imaginary peril that he faced. The fate of Hus at the hands of the Council of Constanz was fresh in all men's memory; at this very moment a letter was passing between the Cardinal of Tortosa and his Imperial friend and pupil, in which Adrian strongly exhorted the latter to seize Luther and to send him to the Pope for deserved punishment. The question as to whether the heresiarch could safely come to Worms had been discussed in an elaborate report addressed by the Saxon Chancellor Brück to Spalatin, with the result that the latter sent a message to Luther at Oppenheim warning him against going farther. The answer was, "Though there were as many devils in Worms as there are tiles upon the roof I will go there." He was too near the crisis of his fate to hesitate or draw back.[1]

[1] *Acta D. M. Lutheri Wormatiae habita*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi. p. 6; conf. Erl. D. S. vol. lxiv. p. 368; Gachard, *Corr. de Charles Quint et d'Adrian VI*, p. 244; Förstemann, p. 64. In the *Table Talk*, vol. iv. p. 348; *Coll.* vol. i. p. 439, Luther is represented as having given his reply to the Herald, who, somewhere about Erfurt, asked him, when news of the mandate came, whether he would still go on to Worms; but I follow in the text what seems to be the earliest and best authenticated account. Conf. De Wette, vol. i. p. 587.

What may have been Glapion's exact motives in this transaction it is hard to say. He may have simply desired to betray Luther; he may have wished to silence Hutten and to secure Sickingen in the interests of the Emperor; he may have thought that he saw the opportunity of ending the whole Lutheran difficulty by the introduction of a new plan of reform. Sickingen's conduct is easily explicable. Under Hutten's influence he had declared for Luther, but he was a staunch Imperialist, expecting to employ his levies in Charles's service; and it would not be very difficult to persuade him that Luther had been imprudent or arrogant, and that a man of Glapion's abilities and opportunities might reconcile him, if only he would be reasonable, with the Pope, and so secure all the practical advantages that any one desired. As for Bucer, this was the kind of troubled water in which he delighted all his life to fish. Against Hutten the case is blackest. The doubled pension, the suspicious silence, the cessation of revolutionary threats, all look as if his were a simple case of bribery, a disgraceful end to a career which had not been without elements of nobleness. Still there are extenuating circumstances. We have seen that he was Imperialist to the heart's core. He may easily have been persuaded by Glapion that the Emperor's intentions were what he wished them to be. He may have been deluded by the confessor's grand combination. There is good evidence to show that in May, immediately after the publication of the Edict in which Luther was condemned, he threw up his pension on that very ground. But his position as a leader of the Reform was irrecoverably gone, and for the few years that he yet lived he retires into the background of our narrative.[1]

It was towards noon on the 16th April that the watcher on the tower gate of Worms gave notice by sound of trumpet that Luther's humble cavalcade was drawing near. First rode Deutschland; next came the covered carriage with Luther and his three friends; last of all Justus Jonas on horseback,

[1] *Hutteni Opp.* ed. Böcking, Supp. ii. pp. 806, 807; *Ibid.* ii. pp. 210, 340; for the "Invectives," see *Ibid.* ii. pp. 12 *seq.*; Brieger, pp. 133, 134, 227; *Zeitschrift für K. G.* vol. ii. pp. 124-126; Ulmann, *F. v. S.* p. 178 *seq.*; Strauss, *U. v. H.* pp. 423 *seq.* 446; *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 348; *Coll.* vol. i. p. 439.

with some escort of knights who had ridden out from Worms to meet them. The news quickly spread, and though it was dinner-time the streets were thronged, and two thousand men and women accompanied the heretic to his lodging in the house of the Knights of St. John. Here he was close to the Elector, while his companions in his lodging were two Saxon councillors, Philip von Feilitsch and Frederick von Thun, as well as the hereditary marshal of the Empire, Ulrich von Pappenheim. Aleander sent out one of his servants to bring him news; he returned with the report that as Luther alighted from his carriage a priest had taken him in his arms, "and having touched his coat three times, had gone away glorying as if he had touched a relic of the greatest saint in the world." On the other hand, Luther looked round about him "with his demoniac eyes," and said, "God will be with me." Ten or twelve persons dined with him, and after dinner all the world came to see him. So far Aleander.[1] What he did not report, probably because he did not know it, was that next morning, at the crisis of his own fate, Luther characteristically found time to visit and to administer the sacrament to a sick Saxon knight, Hans von Münkewitz. He had already written to Glapion, and asked the confessor, if he still had any communication to make to him, to come to him. The answer was that it was now too late. The matter had passed out of the region of intrigue and compromise, into that where conflicts of principle are clear and decisive.[2]

But the moment at which Aleander was most despondent as to his own mission and the cause of the Church, was really that of his approaching triumph. The arrangements for Luther's appearance before the Diet were put into his hands: he drew up the terms on which he was to be interrogated, and provided the copies of his books which he was to be required to acknowledge or deny. The audience to which Luther was summoned was fixed for 4 P.M., and the fact was announced to him by Ulrich von Pappenheim, the hereditary marshal of the Empire. When the time came there was a

[1] Brieger, p. 143.

[2] Steitz, p. 48; Förstemann, p. 68; Spal. *Ann.* p. 39; Peutinger ap. Kolde, *Anal. Luther.* p. 28; *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 349; *Coll.* vol. i. p. 440.

great crowd assembled to see the heretic, and his conductors Pappenheim and Deutschland were obliged to take him to the hall of audience in the Bishop's Palace through gardens and by back ways. There he was introduced into the presence of the Estates. He has left no record of what his feelings were, but it is not difficult to imagine them. He was "a peasant and a peasant's son," who, though he had written bold letters to pope and prelate, had never spoken face to face with the great ones of the land, not even with his own Elector, of whose goodwill he was assured. Now he was bidden to answer, less for himself than for what he believed to be the truth of God, before the representatives of the double authority by which the world is swayed. For the young Emperor, who looked at him with such impassive eyes, speaking no word either of encouragement or rebuke, or even curiosity, was to him more than a mere German monarch: he was, to use a mediæval metaphor, the moon in the intellectual sky, at once the symbol and the possessor of all worldly rule; while on the other hand Caracciolo and Aleander represented the still greater, the intrinsically superior power of the successor of Peter, the Vicar of Christ. At the Emperor's side stood his brother Ferdinand, the new founder of the House of Austria, while round them were grouped six out of the seven Electors, Mainz, Köln, Trier, Saxony, Pfalz, Brandenburg, and a crowd of princes, prelates, nobles, delegates of free cities, who represented every phase of German and ecclesiastical feeling. The material adjuncts of the scene we have no means of reproducing; the hall of audience has perished in the general ruin of ancient Worms. But this throws us back all the more impressively upon its human contrasts: the Emperor, just about to take his policy into his own hands, and, provided he could get his own terms, resolved to do the work of the Church; the eager Nuncio, with his whole soul in his mission, incapable of seeing any weakness in his own, any strength in his opponent's case; the Elector of Saxony, still divided in heart between his treasure of relics at Wittenberg and the spiritual force which Luther exercised upon him, but in any case resolved that his Professor should have fair play; the princes and nobles, full of their grievances

against the Papacy, yet fearing lest, in their eagerness for redress, they should fall into heresy; men like Spalatin, Peutinger, Spengler, Schurf, watching the turns of Luther's fate with beating hearts; and the monk himself, no longer wholly confident, wholly joyful, but desiring above all things to be able to play the man in this supreme moment of crisis, and to bear witness to Christ and the truth. It was a turning-point of modern European history, at which the great issues which presented themselves to men's consciences were greater still than they knew.[1]

The proceedings began with an injunction given by Pappenheim to Luther that he was not to speak unless spoken to. Then John von Eck, Official General of the Archbishop of Trier, a man by no means to be confounded with the champion of the Leipzig disputation, first in Latin, then in German, put, by Imperial command, two questions to Luther. First, did he acknowledge these books here present—showing a bundle of books which were circulated under his name—to be his own? and, secondly, was he willing to withdraw and recall them and their contents, or did he rather adhere to and persist in them? At this point Schurf, who acted as Luther's counsel, interposed with the demand, "Let the titles be read." The Official, in reply, recited one by one the titles of the books comprised in the collected edition of Luther's works published at Basel, "among which were the Commentaries on the Psalms, the Sermon of Good Works, the Commentary on the Lord's Prayer, and, besides these, other Christian books, not of a contentious kind." Upon this, Luther made answer, first in German, then in Latin. It seemed as if, in presence of so splendid an assembly, at such a moment of highest importance, his courage had almost failed him; he spoke, says an ear-witness, with "an almost mild, languid voice, so that even those who were close to him could hardly hear him, and as if he were terrified and not master of himself." But he plucked up heart, and after reciting the questions which had been put to him, said, that he could not deny that the books named were his. The second question, he went on, was more difficult to answer, "because it is a question of faith and the salvation of souls,

[1] Brieger, pp. 145, 146.

and because it concerns the Divine Word, than which there is nothing greater, either in heaven or in earth. If he spoke without due consideration, he might be overbold and run into grievous peril, and incur the sentence of Christ, 'Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, which is in heaven.' On these grounds, therefore, he suppliantly asked his Imperial Majesty for time for deliberation, that he might answer the interrogation without injury to the Divine Word or peril of his own soul." This answer was hardly what was expected, either by friend or foe. To either it must have seemed to contain an element of evasion, little in accordance with Luther's character for courage, if not audacity. When the Official, after some interval of deliberation among the separate Estates, announced that a delay of twenty-four hours would be granted, and, in making the announcement, remarked that Luther well knew what he had been sent for, and had had sufficient time to prepare his reply, it was easy to feel that he had some show of right on his side. Yet might not Luther have inferred from the terms of his citation—not that his appearance before the Diet was to be restricted to this simple question and answer, but that his case was to be formally and fully heard? Nor can I see any reason to suspect that the answer which he actually gave was anything but the simple, straightforward expression of his then mood of mind. In the august presence in which he stood he probably realised, with a quite fresh vividness, the importance of the issues which God had committed to his charge, and the necessity that he should speak no hasty or imprudent word.[1]

Luther's first appearance before the Diet hardly increased his reputation in high places. Charles himself is reported to have said: "This man will never make a heretic of me." Aleander, on the authority of the Archbishop of Trier and his Official, ventures so far as to allege that the Elector was dissatisfied with his champion. But however this may have been, the people were still with him. The streets were crowded with applauding friends as he went to his lodging; he was

[1] *Acta Wormatiae habita*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi. p. 6 *seq.*; Förstemann, p. 69; Steitz, p. 48; Brieger, p. 146; Balan, p. 175; Peutinger ap. Kolde, *Anal. Luther.* p. 28.

exhorted in various terms to play the man, and testify to the truth before kings and princes; one voice was heard, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee." Philip, the young Landgrave of Hesse, as yet only a boy of seventeen, and destined to play so conspicuous a part in the drama of reformation, now looked Luther in the face for the first time; he came to his lodging, and having spoken with him, ended by saying, "Dear doctor, if you are in the right, so may our Lord God help you." Many nobles, too, offered their encouragement: there was a talk of burning him, they said, but ere that should happen all should be involved in a common ruin. One quaint incident we cannot precisely date; it belongs either to the Wednesday or the Thursday of this eventful week. The celebrated partisan leader George von Frundsberg, a man who, whatever his freedom from theological convictions or prejudices, knew courage when he saw it, clapped him on the shoulder, with the words: "Little monk, little monk, now goest thou thy way, to take a stand such as I, and many a commander, even in our sharpest battles, have never taken: art thou of good intent, and certain of thine affair, so go in God's name, and be comforted, God will not forsake thee."[1] But what Luther's own mood at this precise moment was we know on the best evidence. On this very evening of the 17th of April he wrote a letter to Cuspinian, a man of letters at Vienna, the acquaintance of whose brother he had made at Worms. He narrates, in the briefest possible phrase, the facts of his first audience, saying that he had acknowledged the authorship of the books, but as to recantation, had asked and received a day's delay. "But I shall not withdraw a single jot, Christ being favourable to me." In this frame of mind he awaited the morrow.[2]

The hearing on the 18th was held in a larger room than that of the day before, but nevertheless so crowded that even the Electors had a difficulty in taking their proper places. The legates were absent. Four o'clock was the appointed hour, but other business caused delay, and it was growing dark when Eck repeated to Luther, first in Latin and then in

[1] Spangenberg, *Adelsspiegel*, vol. ii. p. 54, quoted by Köstlin, *M. L.* vol. i. p. 445.

[2] Pallavicini, lib. i. cap. 26, § 7; *Acta*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi. p. 8; Cochlaeus, p. 57 A; Erl. D. S. vol. lxiv. pp. 369-373; *T. T.* vol. iv. p. 349; De Wette, vol. i. p. 587.

German, the questions of the preceding day, in a somewhat altered shape. The form of procedure had been committed by the Emperor to Eck, Glapion, and Aleander, and it may have been by their deliberate intention that Luther was now asked, "Whether he wished to defend all the books which he had acknowledged as his own, or to retract any part of them?" He began his answer in Latin,[1] by an apology for any mistakes that he might make in addressing personages so great, "as a man versed, not in courts, but in monks' cells;" then, repeating his acknowledgment of his books, proceeded to divide them into three classes. There were some in which he had treated the piety of faith and morals so simply and evangelically that his very adversaries had been compelled to confess them useful, harmless, and worthy of Christian reading. How could he condemn these? There were others in which he attacked the Papacy and the doctrine of the Papists, who both by their teachings and their wretched examples have wasted Christendom with both spiritual and corporal evil. Nor could any one deny or dissimulate this, since the universal experience and complaint bear witness that by the laws of the Pope and the doctrines of men consciences are miserably ensnared and vexed, especially in this illustrious German nation. If he should revoke these books, what would it be but to add force to tyranny, and to open, not merely the windows, but the doors to so great impiety? In that case, good God, what a cover of wickedness and tyranny would he not become! A third class of his books had been written against private persons, those, namely, who had laboured to protect the Roman tyranny, and to undermine the piety which he taught. In these he confessed that he had been more bitter than became his religion and profession. Even these, however, he could not recall, because to do so would be to throw his shield over tyranny and impiety, and to augment their violence against the people of God. From this he proceeded to ask for evidence against

[1] There is a direct conflict of evidence on this point. Spalatin (*Annales*, p. 41) says that Luther answered first in Latin. The same is implied in Spalatin's report, preserved by Förstemann, p. 69, and in the *Acta* (Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi. p. 9). On the other hand, in the German report of a conversation held by Luther at Eisleben in 1546, a few days before his death (Erl. D. S. vol. lxiv. p. 370), he is said to have spoken first in German.

himself and a fair trial, adducing the words of Christ before Annas: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil." Then, with a touch of his native boldness, he told his audience that it needed to beware "lest the reign of this most excellent youth Prince Charles (on whom, after God, many hopes are fixed) should become unhappy and of evil omen." "I might," he continued, "illustrate the matter more copiously by Scriptural examples—as Pharaoh, the king of Babylon, the kings of Israel —who most completely ruined themselves at the moment when by wisest counsels they were zealous to strengthen and pacify their kingdoms. For it is He who taketh the wise in their own craftiness, and overturns the mountains before they know it. Therefore it is needful to fear God. I do not say these things because my teaching or admonition is necessary to persons of such eminence, but because I ought not to withhold from my Germany my due obedience. And with these things I commend myself to your most serene Majesty, and to your Lordships, humbly asking that you will not suffer me to be brought into ill repute by the efforts of my adversaries. I have spoken."[1]

This speech, spoken as it was with steady composure and a voice that could be clearly heard by the whole assembly, did not satisfy the Official. His first demand was that, like the question to which it was an answer, it should be repeated in German. Next, Eck proceeded to point out that Luther's errors, which were the errors of former heretics, Wiclif, Hus, and the like, had been sufficiently condemned by the Church, and particularly by the Council of Constanz. If Luther were willing to recant them, the Emperor would engage that his other works, in which they were not contained, should be tenderly handled: if not, let him recollect the fate of other books condemned by the Church. Then, with the customary exhortation to all theological innovators not to set their own opinions against those of apostles, saints, and martyrs, the Official said that what he wanted was a simple and straightforward answer, Was Luther willing to recant or not? To which Luther: "Since your most serene Majesty and your Lordships ask for a

[1] *Acta Wormatiae habita*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi. pp. 9 *seq.*; Peutinger ap. Kolde, *Anal. Luther.* pp. 28, 29; Steitz, pp. 48 *seq.*; Förstemann, pp. 68 *seq.*

simple answer, I will give it, 'neither horned nor toothed,' after this fashion: Unless I am convinced by witness of Scripture or plain reason (for I do not believe in the Pope or in Councils alone, since it is agreed that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am overcome by the Scriptures which I have adduced, and my conscience is caught in the word of God. I neither can nor will recant anything, for it is neither safe nor right to act against one's conscience." Then having given this answer in both languages, he added in German, "God help me. Amen." But Eck,[1] and those whose mouthpiece he was, were still dissatisfied. This open expression of disbelief in the infallibility not only of Popes but of Councils was a thing too monstrous. If every one who contradicted the decisions of Councils and the mind of the Church could claim the right of being confuted by Scripture, nothing in Christianity would be fixed and determined. What had Luther to say to this? His answer was perfectly explicit. He could prove that Councils had erred; he could not recall what was openly stated in Scripture. At this moment the debate seemed likely to degenerate into an altercation, when Charles would hear no more and dismissed the assembly. It had now grown dark: passions on both sides vented themselves in clamour. Luther's friends encouraged, the Spaniards hissed him. When he went away under charge of the escort that had been given him, some of the German nobles imagined that he was in custody, and for a moment thought of rescue. But a word removed the misapprehension, and all went homeward peaceably.[2]

There is no doubt as to what was Luther's mood that night. An eye-witness relates that when he reached his lodging he threw up his hands with a joyful gesture, and cried, "I am through; I am through!"[3] To Spalatin he said "that if he had a thousand heads, he would lose them sooner than recant."[4] His Elector, who yet, with characteristic caution, avoided all personal communication with him, the same night expressed to his chaplain his satisfaction with the appearance which his Saxon theologian had made before the Diet.

[1] Balan, p. 175 *seq.*: *Acta comparitionis Lutheri in Diaeta Wormatiensi.*

[2] *Acta*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi.: Peutinger, Steitz, Förstemann, Balan, *ubi supra.*

[3] Oelhafen in Riederer, *Nachrichten*, vol. iv. p. 97.

[4] Spal. *Annales*, pp. 41, 49.

Duke Erich of Brunswick, a stout old Catholic, sent him, in the midst of the heat and excitement of the debate, a draught of Eimbeck beer in a silver can.[1] He might well be cheerful, for he had passed, without betrayal of the truth or of himself, through the supreme crisis of his life. The conflict, both of persons and of principles, had been clear and decisive. He had faced the world's highest representatives of Church and State, and had not been discomfited. To the authority of Pope, Church, Council he had opposed the authority of Scripture, reason, conscience. Not even the most enthusiastic believer in compromise could any longer imagine that reconciliation between those hostile powers was possible; and the forces, that were to engage in a struggle to the death, were already being marshalled.[2]

The semblance of trial, which alone was allowed to Luther, was now over; it only remained to pass sentence. Early on the morning of the 19th of April the Emperor summoned the Diet once more to take counsel upon the matter.[3] The Estates asked for time to deliberate; on which the Emperor, replying that he would first give them his own opinion, produced a

[1] Selneccer, quoted by Köstlin, *M. L.* vol. i. p. 454.

[2] The usual account is that Luther ended his speech before the Diet with the words: "Hier steh' ich: ich kann nicht anders, Gott helff mir. Amen." ("Here I stand, I can no other, God help me. Amen.") This version occurs in the *Acta D. Martini Lutheri in Comitiis Principum Wormatiae*, 1521. But it is very difficult to say how far this document can be considered to be the work of Luther himself, while most of the indisputably contemporary reports give the phrase, "God help me, Amen," with slight variations of form. The question is one of great nicety, and requires for its settlement much balancing of minute literary evidence. It was first started by Burkhardt, who, in a paper published in the *Theol. Studien u. Kritiken* for 1869, decided against the authenticity of the usually accepted words. Köstlin, in a Universitäts-Programm of 1874, as well as in the *Th. St. u. Kr.* for 1875, took the opposite side, which he still maintains (*Th. St. u. Kr.* 1882; *M. Luther*, 3d ed. 1883). Mönckeberg (*Th. St. u. Kr.* 1876); Knaake (*Zeitschrift. f. Lutherische Theologie u. Kirche*, 1870); Elter (*Luther u. d. Wormser Reichstag*, 1886) have, with others, continued the controversy. The general conclusion, in which I am compelled to concur, is in favour of the shorter phrase. As all the accounts, however, mention that the Diet broke up in confusion and tumult, it is possible that the "Hier steh' ich" may have been uttered by Luther, as a last word amid the growing storm, and only imperfectly heard by the bystanders. In any case, I cannot agree with Maurenbrecher (*Kath. Reform.* vol. i. p. 398) in thinking the phrase theatrical, and therefore unworthy of Luther. To its tone and colour it would be easy to find many parallels in his letters.

[3] It is probably at this point that we are to place the document printed by Balan (p. 184), *Sententia March. Brandenburgens. de Luthero*, which is couched in the name of the Elector Joachim and his brother. It was in all likelihood made of no effect by the initiative of the Emperor, mentioned in the text.

document written in French, in his own hand, with an accompanying translation into German. Beginning with the statement of his descent from Emperors, Kings of Spain, Archdukes of Austria, and Dukes of Burgundy, all of whom had lived and died faithful sons of the Church and defenders of the Catholic faith, it announced the identity of his policy with theirs. Whatever his predecessors had decreed in matters ecclesiastical, whatever had been decided by the Council of Constanz and other Councils, he would uphold. Luther had set himself against the whole of Christendom, alleging it to be, both now and for a thousand years past, in error and only himself in possession of the truth. The Estates had heard the obstinate answer which he had made the day before; let him be no further heard, and let him be taken back whence he came, the terms of his safe-conduct being carefully observed; but let him be forbidden to preach, nor suffered to corrupt the people with his vile doctrine. "And as we have before said, it is our will that he should be proceeded against as a true and evident heretic. Admonishing you that in this thing you should give your opinions as good Christians, and as you have promised. Given under my own hand." The reading of this paper produced a great effect. Many of the princes, says Aleander, who was present, turned pale as death. The good news was to be at once announced to the Pope; the document itself to be translated into Latin, Italian, German, Spanish, French, and Flemish, and published throughout Christendom. Aleander was in a state of rapturous delight; he could not speak too highly of "this most Christian and truly Catholic Prince." "We ourselves," he said, "should have been content with something less." And, indeed, the importance of the event could hardly be exaggerated. It announced that Charles was emancipated from his counsellors, that his ecclesiastical policy was henceforth to proceed from himself alone, and that the Empire was to join hands with the Church for the suppression of heresy. And when, within a few weeks, Chièvres, the adviser to whom Charles was fast bound by ties of youthful habit, died, the fact that the Emperor had an opinion of his own, and knew how to assert it, put a new face upon the politics of Europe.[1]

[1] Brieger, pp. 153, 154; Förstemann, p. 75.

Not even this plain declaration of the Imperial will, however, broke down the resistance of those members of the Diet who thought that Luther had had less than fair play. The debate on the Emperor's communication lasted through Friday afternoon and the whole of Saturday, when at last the decision of the Princes was made known. There can be no doubt that Aleander's three hours' speech on the 13th of February had made an impression; it had clearly brought home to the minds of many who heard it, that Luther was not merely a rebel, but a heretic, who denied doctrines authoritatively taught by the Church. All, then, that the Princes ask is that he shall have a further hearing. Would it be well that he should be able to say that the matters in which he had erred had never been stated to him? Would it be well that the common people should think that he had been condemned without trial? They call to mind the word of Scripture, that God does not desire the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his wickedness and live; they are of opinion that it would be a Christian act, and a work of fraternal charity, to bring back the said Luther from his errors to the way of truth and the holy Christian faith. They advise, therefore, that three or four persons, grave, and well versed in Holy Writ, should see Luther, and discuss the whole matter with him. Then, if he still perseveres in his heresy, let him be proceeded against as a hardened heretic, in which case the Estates promise his Majesty their aid and assistance.[1]

This moderate expression of the will of the Estates would of itself have produced little effect upon the mind of the Emperor, which, awakened to self-determination for the first time, adhered to its resolve with persistence. But in the night between the 19th and 20th of April ominous signs of revolt made their appearance. A paper was found in the royal apartments, bearing the words, "Woe to the land whose king is a child!" To the Town Hall was affixed a placard, in which 400 knights gave notice of feud to the Romanists, and especially to the Archbishop of Mainz, and announced their intention not to forsake righteous Luther. And with this defiance was mingled the Peasants' war-cry, soon to be heard

[1] *Acta Wormatiae habita*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi. p. 15; Balan, p. 158.

amid frightful civil carnage. "I write badly," ended the placard, "but I mean a great damage; with 8000 soldiers will I make war; Bundschuh, Bundschuh, Bundschuh!" This shook the courage of some timid Elector, probably the Archbishop of Mainz, who early next morning made a vain appeal to the Emperor. This was followed up by the Elector of Brandenburg, and, on other grounds, by the Elector of Saxony, whose united efforts at last prevailed with Charles, who, however, declared that in no respect was his own opinion changed, to grant a delay of three days. If within that period they could prevail upon Luther to recant, well and good; but neither he, nor any of his, would have anything to do with the attempt. The management of the affair fell, we hardly know how, into the hands of Richard von Greiffenklau, Archbishop of Trier, whom, it will be remembered, Miltitz had proposed to Luther as a judge in his case. Aleander was again alarmed at the possibility of a compromise; he disliked anything that even looked like a lay settlement of an ecclesiastical question, and he wrote to the Archbishop to point out to him that no satisfactory result could be attained unless the authority of the Holy See were fully acknowledged.[1]

The commission with which Luther had now to deal consisted of the Electors of Trier and Brandenburg, representing the Electors; the Bishops of Augsburg and Brandenburg, representing the Prelates; Duke George of Saxony and the Master of the Teutonic Order, representing the Princes; Hans Bock and Conrad Peutinger, representing the Free Cities. On the other hand, Luther was accompanied by the friends whom he had brought with him to Worms, as well as by Schurf and Spalatin. The Chancellor of Baden, Hieronymus Vehus, conducted the proceedings, which began in the lodging of the Archbishop of Trier, at six o'clock on the morning of Wednesday, April 24th. The composition of the commission was in some respects not unfriendly to Luther; in particular its President, the Archbishop, was a man of moderate views, closely connected by friendship with the Elector of Saxony. It is not necessary, in this place, to follow a fruitless negotiation

[1] Steitz, p. 51; Brieger, p. 158 *seq.*; Balan, p. 192; Thomas, *Auszügen aus Marino Sanuto's Diarien*, p. 15.

through all its windings. The heretic made his old appeal to Scripture: if he were to be judged by that standard, he was willing to submit his writings to the Emperor, otherwise he must stand by his own conscience. The main point of difference between himself and the commission was clearly brought out by a question which the Margrave of Brandenburg put to him. "Did you say that you would not give way unless convinced by Holy Writ?" "Yea, most clement Lord," was the answer, "or by most clear and evident reasons." The juxtaposition of reason and Scripture, in this phrase, which repeats a similar declaration made by Luther before the Diet, indicates a moment at which he almost apprehended the true logic of his position. Presently it will be a matter of some interest to inquire under what intellectual or moral pressure he fell back upon the less defensible position of Scripture as the sole and indefeasible authority in matters of faith.[1]

When the commission broke up, in order that its members might attend the meeting of the Diet, the Archbishop called Luther into his own room. He had with him his Official, Eck, and Cochlaeus, dean of the Church of the Blessed Virgin at Frankfurt, a humanist, who now for the first time took a decisive part against Luther, but afterwards became one of his bitterest adversaries. Luther, on the other hand, was accompanied by Schurf and Amsdorf. The conversation turned a good deal upon the Council of Constanz and the propositions which it had condemned. If we are to believe Aleander, Luther was signally worsted in the discussion, admitting that he had not written his own books, and being driven by the superior dialectical skill of his opponents into manifest self-contradiction. A part of the same report, more probably true, is that the heretic made the same appeal to Scripture and conscience as before, and could not be persuaded to stir a step in the direction of recantation. At this point the Archbishop thought fit to report his ill success to the Diet, while at the same moment Chièvres, Gattinara, and the Bishops of Liege and Palencia brought to the Assembly the opinion of the Emperor, that, after such a display of obstinacy, it was now time to send back that "dog," and to carry out the

[1] *Acta Wormatiae habita*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi. p. 16; Cochlaeus, pp. 60-66.

sentence passed upon him. But even now the Diet was not ready to take extreme measures. It asked that the Archbishop might be permitted privately to confer with Luther, and to exhort him to recantation. The request was granted, and a further delay of two days accorded for the purpose.

The hope of compromise does not seem to have been quite given up on either side; for on the morning of the next .day Vehus and Peutinger—the latter of whom certainly could not be reckoned among Luther's adversaries—came to him to beg that he would simply and absolutely submit his writings to the judgment of Charles and the Empire. When he refused this, on the ground that the Word of God could not be subjected to the judgment of men, they returned in the afternoon with another proposition, that the matter should be referred to a future council. To this Luther assented, but only on the condition that they should exhibit the propositions, taken from his works, which were to be submitted to the council, and that these should be judged on grounds of Scripture. This concession Vehus and Peutinger reported to the Archbishop, but in a much more absolute form than that in which it had been made. The result of this misunderstanding apparently was to take away the last chance, if any still existed, of an agreement. Luther was again summoned to the Archbishop's room. But indeed, it is not easy to reconcile the account of the interview given by Aleander, who was not present, with that of Luther, who was. According to the former, the Archbishop attempted to bribe Luther by the offer of Church preferment, which was indignantly rejected, and then went on to make four propositions to him, each of which was, in the view of the Legate, more inadmissible than the last. The first was that he should submit himself to the joint judgment of the Emperor and the Pope; the second, that the Emperor should be the sole judge, but that he should afterwards take the opinion of the Holy See; the third, that the decision should lie with Charles and the Estates of the Empire; the fourth, that Luther should retract at once some of his worst errors, and remit a decision upon the rest to a future council. It was upon the rejection of each and all of these propositions that the Archbishop gave up his vain attempt at compromise.

Luther's own story is that the final rupture took place on the often-mentioned decrees of the Council of Constanz. To the Archbishop asking "What he would do if articles, to be submitted to the council, were selected from his works?" Luther answered, "Provided only they are not those which the Council of Constanz has already condemned." The Archbishop said that he feared it would be those very articles. Then said Luther, "I neither can nor will be silent in any such case, for I am certain that by those decrees is condemned the Word of God; so that I would rather lose life and head than forsake so clear a Word of the Lord." Emperor, Pope, Council, Diet, being thus rejected as a court of appeal by the obstinate Reformer, what remained but to carry the Imperial mandate into execution? On the 25th of April Luther was officially informed that on the next day his permitted time of sojourn in Worms was at an end, that twenty-one days under safe-conduct were allowed for his return whence he came, and that all preaching and writing by the way were interdicted to him. He left Worms next day.[1]

In some respects the appearance of Luther before the Diet of Worms must be regarded as a maimed occasion. He had not received the fair trial, before learned and impartial judges, for which he had asked. He had not been permitted to defend any of his characteristic doctrines, or to show their accord with Scripture. What indirect discussion of principles had taken place had not been in the presence of the Estates, but in the private conferences with the Archbishop of Trier. All that the world knew was that he had been publicly required to withdraw the doctrines contained in the books of which he had acknowledged the authorship, and that he had refused to do so. He had found little open sympathy, nor had any party in the Diet organised itself in his defence. His controversy with his opponents had been on a question not of doctrine but of jurisdiction; he had gradually been driven into the confession that he could not submit himself to the arbitrament even of a General Council, unless he could secure beforehand

[1] *Acta Wormatiae habita*, Erl. *Opp.* v. a. vol. vi. p. 19 *seq.*; Seidemann, *Dr. H. Vehus* in *Zeitschrift für Hist. Theol.* 1851; Brieger, pp. 160 *seq*; Balan, pp. 192 *seq.*; Cochlaeus, pp. 60 *seq.*; Förstemann, p. 71; Spalatin, *Annales*, pp. 42 *seq.*; Steitz, p. 50.

that it would be guided by the superior authority of Scripture. What he had really done was simply to stand fast. Whether involved in any inconsistencies of intellectual theory or not, he had been faithful to his own conscience. He left Worms, not knowing what might befall him, or where he might find a refuge. He knew that he might now reckon upon the hostility of the Emperor, as well as upon the hostility of the Pope, and that his only hope must be in the providence of God, and the cautious friendship of the Elector. Yet not the less had one of the world's great moral victories been won, and a name added to the too short list of genuine heroes. No triumphal procession that ever climbed the Sacred Way to the Capitol, when Rome was every year adding new provinces to the Republic, could compare in moral grandeur with Luther's humble cavalcade, as, discomfited, condemned, almost friendless, he rode away from Worms.

Aleander's victory was now won; but the task remained of defining and recording it. Before many days had passed there was a meeting of Electors and Princes in regard to Luther's affair; the Elector of Saxony held his peace; the rest manifested their willingness to concur with the Emperor. The preparation of the decree with the necessary explanations was entrusted to the Legate, who was nothing loth to undertake the task. It was high time, however, that something should be done as to the important national objects for which the Diet had been convened, but which had hitherto suffered postponement to the struggle between the Church and heresy. Neither in regard to the "Reichsregiment," nor the Imperial Court of Justice, nor the Emperor's expedition to Rome had any substantial progress been made. The first question was now settled, though not exactly as either the Emperor or the Estates might have wished; the exact terms of the agreement belong to the domain of German constitutional history. The same must be said of the institution of the "Kammergericht." If the report of Gasparo Contarini, the Venetian ambassador at Worms, is to be trusted, the Estates adopted something like the English plan of refusing supply until grievances had been redressed. They offered to the Emperor a force of twenty thousand footmen and four thousand horsemen for his expedi-

tion to Rome, on condition that he complied with their wishes as to "Reichsregiment" and "Kammergericht." A further dispute arose as to the time at which the troops were to be ready; the Emperor wanted them in March, the Estates were willing to supply them in September 1522; the date finally fixed, August 1522, was the result of a compromise. Then came a still more difficult question—that of taxation. The new Council and High Court of Justice were estimated to cost fifty thousand gulden a year; who was to pay it, and how was it to be raised? There were various suggestions; one, against which the free cities protested, to get the money by customs' duties; another, much more popular, to arrest the afflux of good German gold to Rome. The result was, that the principle of a proportionate contribution, proposed at the Diet of Constanz in 1507, was adopted and readjusted to the circumstances of the occasion. With this, it might almost seem as if a new constitution had been given to Germany, and a beginning made of orderly and peaceful political life. But the arbitrary instincts of the Emperor, his frequent absences from the Empire, his implication in European politics, the growing power and selfish aims of the House of Austria, and the conflicting ambitions of the princes, combined to make this hope futile. The Diet of Worms hardly rises to the dignity of an epoch in German constitutional history.[1]

There was, however, another question, one that lay very near the heart of the German people, pressing for a settlement which it was not destined to receive. To one Diet after another schedules of *gravamina* against the Papal administration of the Church had been presented, hitherto without effect, and the Diet of Worms was no exception to the rule. When after Aleander's speech on Ash Wednesday the affair of Luther was considered by the Diet, the Estates concluded their reply with a request that the Emperor would look upon the oppression at the hands of the Holy See under which Germany groaned—a request to which Charles in his reply promised his best attention. A commission was appointed, which, beginning its

[1] Brieger, p. 178; Ranke, vol. i. pp. 356 *seq.*; Baumgarten, vol. i. pp. 445 *seq.* Students who wish to follow the negotiations as to the Reichsregiment into all its details, should consult A. Brückner, *Zur Geschichte des Reichstags zu Worms.*

labours in the early days of March, found the material in which it worked so copious that on the 26th the first part of its report was not ready. It should be clearly understood that the reform at which the *gravamina* aimed was not doctrinal but disciplinary. Duke George of Saxony, the most orthodox of princes, was a large contributor to the list. But the "Hundred Gravamina" were also Luther's complaints on the purely practical side, so that up to this point it was impossible for the Estates of the Empire not to concur with the heretic whom they had just condemned, or to deny that he spoke the voice of the nation which had found solemn expression in almost every Diet for a century past. It is not necessary for me to describe or define the *gravamina* in this connection; whoever is acquainted with the principles of Papal administration in Germany can formulate them for himself. The old grievances were unredressed, and were therefore repeated in a tone of increased and increasing bitterness. So much was this the case that the ecclesiastical members of the commission absented themselves from its later meetings. The document was laid before the Emperor in Council in the early days of May, but nothing came of it. Charles had no objections to make, but he held his peace. He might well; for on the 8th of May he concluded an alliance, offensive and defensive, with the Pope, one of the bases of which was a common activity in the suppression of heresy. Still, had the disciplinary reform of the Church been a matter about which the Emperor greatly cared, it might have been possible to draw the line between the doctrinal demands of Luther and the practical proposals of the Diet—but this was plainly not the moment to make the attempt. After much shuffling, in which it is difficult to say whether a smaller part had been played by religious conviction or patriotic feeling, Charles had now decisively proclaimed himself the friend and ally of the Church. Rome had had one more chance offered to her, and had refused it; Aleander was comfortably assured that the Lutheran coil was over; and Leo went back in perfect security to the manuscripts, the statues, the gems that he loved.[1]

[1] Förstemann, pp. 57, 58; Waltz, *deutschen Nation gegen den römischen* p. 32; Gebhardt, *Die Gravamina der Hof*, pp. 89 *seq.*

In the meantime Aleander had promptly prepared the decree against Luther, and procured its translation into German. But May at Worms was a month of troubles and delays. So far as we dimly gather from the Nuncio's despatches, his first draft was at once accepted, but referred to some council, whether of the Emperor's personal advisers or a committee of the Diet, it is hard to say. By this time the Diet was drawing to its natural end; its political business had been transacted; the alliance between Emperor and Pope had been concluded. Then epidemic sickness broke out among the Emperor's immediate friends. Chièvres fell ill on the 6th of May and died on the 27th. A much shorter sickness carried off the bishop of Tuy, the Emperor's physician. Charles himself kept his room for some days. "Many other distinguished persons," writes Contarini on the 12th of May, "are ill; every day dies somebody, especially among the Spaniards." It was in the midst of the consternation caused by these events that the decree took its final form. Aleander seems still to have thought that all the Emperor had to do was to sign and promulgate it in the exercise of his personal authority, and had once more to be instructed as to the constitutional difference between the Empire and Charles's hereditary dominions. And there were other difficulties in the way. The Diet was beginning to disperse. Two of its most important members, Frederick of Saxony and the Elector Palatine, left Worms on the 23d of May, not sorry, in all probability, to leave the responsibility of what was going to be done on the shoulders of their colleagues.[1]

The Diet was called together for its last sitting on the afternoon of Saturday, May 25th. Before it met, Aleander, in an interview with the Emperor, begged him now to conclude the matter in hand. Charles in reply told him to wait where he was till he came back from the meeting. Thence, the usual compliments incident to the dissolution of the Diet having been passed between monarch and subjects, Charles returned, accompanied by Joachim of Brandenburg, the three ecclesiastical Electors, and some other princes. In the presence of a mixed assembly, in which the Spanish and Italian noblemen probably outnumbered the Germans, the Nuncios pre-

[1] Brieger, pp. 178, 179, 204, 214; Baumgarten, vol. i. p. 485.

sented to the Emperor the Brief addressed to him by the Pope. This document was read aloud by the Chancellor Gattinara, "with great attention on the part of the German princes, and the jubilation of the Spanish and Italian gentlemen." In like manner a similar Brief was presented to each of the four Electors. Then the Emperor, who had in the meantime dismissed all but the Electors and a few others, said to them, "with truly Imperial authority," "This is the Edict which I intend to promulgate in the Lutheran matter; you shall see it." "And then it was read," continues Aleander, "by Dr. Spieghel, with great attention on the part of all; and finally the Elector Joachim said, with the consent and in the name of all, that the Edict was acceptable to them, and that it should be promulgated without the change of an iota, and that this was the mind and conclusion of all the Estates of the Empire." Still, it was not till the next day that the Edict was actually signed. Aleander, who allowed no grass to grow under his feet, was up betimes to secure the intervention of the Chancellor Gattinara with the Emperor. Him he found in bed with the gout, but the Bishop of Palencia was ready to take his place. The first signature to be obtained was that of Albert of Mainz, as Archchancellor of the Empire. From him Aleander proceeded to the Minster, where, after mass (it was the first Sunday after Trinity), he presented himself to the Emperor, who addressed him in French—"I know well that you are not asleep." Then in the midst of the church, surrounded by a brilliant assembly of prelates and nobles, Charles signed both the Latin and the German copies of the Edict. Then smiling, he said to Aleander, "Now you will be content with me." Whereupon the Nuncio broke into a paean—"Of a certainty, Sire; but much more will be content his Holiness, the Holy See and all Christendom, and will thank God, who has given them so good, so holy, so religious an Emperor, whom may God maintain and prosper in these His holy undertakings, by which your Majesty has acquired perpetual glory and an eternal reward with God." Five days afterwards, on the 31st of May, the Emperor left Worms.[1]

The Edict, though actually signed on the 26th of May, was antedated to the 8th. Upon the good faith of this pro-

[1] Brieger, pp. 221, 222, 223.

ceeding a lively controversy has arisen. The coincidence with the 8th of May, the day on which the alliance between Emperor and Pope was said to have been made, may be regarded as accidental, as the treaty was certainly not ratified by Leo till near the end of the month. But was not the change of date intended to convey the idea to the world that the Edict had been issued while the Diet was still in full session, especially as in section 26 and elsewhere occur the words, "by virtue of the dignity, height, and authority of our Imperial office, and moreover with the unanimous advice and goodwill of our and the Holy Empire's Electors, Princes, and Estates now here assembled"? It is true that the same words, in not quite so precise a form, are found in a kind of introduction to the Edict, which openly bears the date of May 26th;[1] while one distinguished critic[2] insists that the 8th of May was really the date at which the Edict assumed its present shape, both in Latin and in German. But it is obvious to reply that official documents do not take their date from any period of their intellectual gestation, but from the time at which the requisite signature makes them valid. The only conclusions to which it is possible to come are, first, that the Edict cannot be considered an act of the Diet, as it was first produced after its last sitting had come to an end, and then only to a few of its members; and secondly, that the date was altered with a view of giving it an official weight which it did not really possess.[3]

The document itself bears the plainest traces of its origin. We can well believe Aleander when he declares himself its author. It is written with the pen of a Papal scribe, trying to place himself in the Imperial point of view. It tells the story of Luther's heresies, narrates what had taken place at Worms, vaunts the justice of the Emperor, the clemency of the Pope, paints with a broad brush the wickedness of the criminal on whom it is about to pass sentence. It places Luther and his adherents out of the pale of the law; condemns his books to the flames; and subjects all printing to the control

[1] Neudecker, *Urkunden aus der Ref. Zeit.* p. 2.

[2] Brieger, p. 192 *note.*

[3] *Vide* two papers in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, vol. ix. p. 129:—W. Tesdorpf, *Die Zurückdatierung des Wormser Ediktes*, and Th. Brieger, *Das Datum des Wormser Ediktes.*

of the bishops. Prepared with such eager care, welcomed with such ecstatic enthusiasm, the Edict was but stage thunder after all. Here and there, it is true, Luther's books were burned, but they were reprinted in rapidly multiplying editions. The course of the Reformation was not for a moment stayed—and not a hair of the heresiarch's head was touched. All that the Edict did was to display the Emperor bound hand and foot to the car of the Papacy.[1]

We return to the personal fortunes of Luther. Attended by the same companions as had escorted him on his journey thither, he rode out of Worms on Friday, April 26th. At Oppenheim he was overtaken by the Herald, and the whole party proceeded to Frankfurt. Hence on Sunday the 28th Luther wrote to Lucas Cranach, the painter, at Wittenberg, a letter. "My service to you, dear gossip Lucas. I bless and commend you to God. I allow myself to be shut up and hidden, I myself know not where. And although I had rather suffer death at the hands of the tyrants, especially those of the raging Duke George of Saxony, yet must I not despise the advice of good people, until His time come."[2] He had received some kind of warning from the Elector of what was to befall him, and had in part admitted Amsdorf to his confidence; but the success of the plan depended upon its being kept secret, and we may easily suppose that he was content to remain in partial ignorance. Friedberg was the next stage in the journey. Hence he wrote letters[3] to the Emperor and the Estates, which he sent back to Worms by the Herald, letters which, as we have seen, were absolutely without effect on his fate. It is the old story: he protests his personal loyalty and obedience to the Emperor; he is willing to submit his case to learned and fair judges; but he cannot give up the authority of the Word of God. If we may judge from a note of the same date, written to Spalatin, these letters were written at the request of the Elector.[4] "Thou hast here the letters for which thou didst ask, my Spalatin; for the rest do thou care." The next night he seems to have

[1] The Edict will be found in Walch, vol. xv. pp. 2264 *seq.*
[2] De Wette, vol. i. p. 588.
[3] *Ibid.* pp. 589, 594.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 601.

spent at Grünberg; and thence went on to Hersfeld, where he was received with great hospitality, both by the Benedictine Abbot and the council of the city. At five o'clock next morning he preached, in defiance, indeed, of the terms of the safe-conduct, yet unwilling that the Word of God should be bound. The Abbot, himself a Prince of the Empire, escorted him some distance on his way, and ordered a farewell meal to be prepared for the party at Berka. Thence a few miles brought him to Eisenach, where he was in the midst of kinsfolk and friends, many of whom came out to welcome him.[1]

At Eisenach he preached once more; the priest of the church endeavouring to protect himself by a notarial protest. Here all his companions left him, except Amsdorf, and the Augustinian brother, John Petzensteiner. These accompanied him to Möhra, the cradle of his race, where his grandmother was still living, and Luthers were in almost every farmstead. Here again, he preached, tradition says under a great linden tree, and on the afternoon of Saturday, May 4th, took his way in the direction of Gotha. But while traversing a wood, behind Schloss Altenstein, not far from a little stream called the Glasbach, the carriage was suddenly attacked by a number of armed horsemen. Brother John, who was not in the secret, as well as Amsdorf, who was, saved themselves as they could; the driver, with a crossbow held to his breast, was bidden to stand still; Luther was carried into the wood by his captors. These proved to be Hans von Berlepsch, the commander of the Wartburg, and the Knight Burkhard Hund, to whom Schloss Altenstein belonged, both of them devoted servants of the Elector. They put Luther on horseback, and by devious ways brought him to the Wartburg, an Electoral residence, half palace, half fortress, which overhangs the town of Eisenach, and is all but visible from its streets.[2]

In days like these, when the communication of news is so rapid and so certain, it is difficult to understand how well the secret of Luther's hiding-place was kept. That he had disappeared, every one knew; whither, no one. Some of his friends, as, for instance, Albert Dürer, lamented him as dead.[3]

[1] Spalatin's *Annales*, p. 50; De Wette, vol. ii. p. 6.

[2] De Wette, vol. ii. pp. 6, 7; Ortmann, *Möhra*, pp. 150 *seq.*, 183 *seq.*

[3] See *ante*, p. 338.

Duke John of Saxony wrote to his brother, that he had heard a report that Luther was hidden in a castle of Sickingen's, not far from the French frontier; but the Elector is prudent, and in reply professes complete ignorance. But besides the few to whom the secret was entrusted there were others who guessed the truth. On the 31st of May Crotus Rubianus wrote from Erfurt to John Hess, "Be of good comfort; not foes but friends have carried him off." Aleander soon suspected what had taken place, though the Elector, he says in a letter of May 15th, swore by every oath that he knew nothing about it. By the beginning of July, however, this suspicion had ripened into certainty; he had heard that Luther, under pretence of being captured by his enemies, had been hidden by the contrivance of "the Saxon fox." Luther himself, no doubt at the instance of those who have him in charge, is cautious. On the 12th of May he writes three letters—one to Melanchthon, one to Amsdorf, and one to Agricola, assuring them of his safety; but they are dated "in regione avium," "in regione volucrum." Presently it came to be "ex Eremo," or "in meiner Pathmos."[1]

Meanwhile Aleander was happily convinced that his work was done. He had, indeed, an uncomfortable time when the news of Luther's disappearance came to Worms; he was told, and repeats the story with the gusto of a timid man who has successfully encountered a danger, of conspiracies that had been made and oaths that had been taken against him, "so that he would not be safe, even in the lap of Caesar." But this danger, as many similar ones had already done, passed away. The comforting news came from Paris that the theological faculty of the University had, on the 15th of April, solemnly condemned Luther's books. And presently, when Aleander followed Charles down the Rhine into the well-affected Burgundian lands, there were burnings of books which were as incense in his nostrils. The Parliament of Paris ordered a like conflagration throughout France; a similar *auto da fe* actually took place in London, when Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, preached a sermon to 30,000 hearers. At the same time, there were clearer eyes than Aleander's, to which the cause of

[1] Kolde, *Friedr. d. Weise*, p. 47; *und Documente*, p. 28; Brieger, pp. Förstemann, pp. 17-19; Krafft, *Briefe* 209-213, 244; De Wette, vol. ii. p. 1 *seq.*

the Papacy in Germany did not present itself in so favourable a light. About the middle of July 1521 the Archbishop of Mainz wrote to the Pope: "Day by day, in spite of the endeavours of all good men, of the Bull of your Blessedness, and the Edict of the Emperor against Martin and his accomplices, the forces of the Lutherans increase; not only are there but very few laymen who are candidly and simply well-affected to Churchmen, but a large portion of the priesthood takes part with Luther, and most are ashamed to stand on the side of the Roman Church, so hated is the name of *curtisani* and the decrees, which with great scorn both the Wittenbergers and others reject." What, then, had the Diet of Worms done for the Church in Germany? And whither had vanished Aleander's victory?[1]

[1] Brieger, pp. 188, 211, 257; R. Pace to Leo X, Balan, p. 255; *Ibid.* p. 268.

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ERRATA

P. 77, line 9, *delete* comma *after* Maternus.

P. 138, note 2, *for* vol. i. *read* lib. i.

P. 152, note 1, line 2, *for* vol. i. *read* lib. i.

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